DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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Don't call me Mrs I'm getting divorced

INSIDE TIMES2

Why late night snacks are bad for your brain

MILITARY EMERGENCY UNIT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Spain's military emergencies unit had its work cut out at Navas del Rey, near Madrid. A 39C heatwave is set to hit northeast Spain and southwest France tomorrow

French race against time to stop fires

David Chazan Gironde

France is racing to contain wildfires across an area a quarter of the size of greater London, before temperatures rise again and risk reigniting those that have been extinguished. Spain is facing the same problem in the regions around Madrid and Valencia.

President Macron said the weeks to come would be "tough and we must hold out" when he visited emergency services in Gironde. "This battle, we are going to win it together, this is the priority," he said.

The advance of the fires in southwest France slowed after rain and a lull in the wind, meaning they were no longer moving closer to Bordeaux. However, another heatwave is expected to push temperatures to 39C tomorrow.

"This is a moment of false calm," said Matthieu Jomain, commander of the Gironde fire brigade. "We are likely to be fighting these fires for some time — weeks, perhaps even months before they are fully extinguished."

More than 220,000 people have fled the fires in France. Macron acknowledged residents' criticism. "I do not underestimate the anger," he said.

Heatwave in Europe, pages 10-11

Burnham's 'hard hat' schools

PM plans to make vocational education the 'first choice' for many GCSE pupils in radical change to curriculum

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor
Georgia Lambert

Children as young as 14 will be encouraged into technical training rather than academic education under plans by Andy Burnham to "value the hard hat as much as the graduation cap".

In an article for The Times, the prime minister announced proposals for a radical shift from the traditional curriculum by prioritising vocational education as the "first choice" for many children beginning their GCSEs.

He accused successive governments of devaluing practical skills in favour of academic subjects that he claimed had led to a record one million young adults becoming disenfranchised and not in education, employment or training (Neets).

The move is a sharp shift from more than 15 years of policy, pioneered by Lord Gove when he was education secretary, that prioritised academic attainment. The new policy will encourage children to combine core subjects such as English, maths and science at GCSE level with high-quality technical subjects linked to the jobs available in the local area.

Pupils would go on to study for technical qualifications, such as T-levels or apprenticeships, rather than A-levels, while gaining work experience and building connections with employers. It is modelled on a system that Burnham introduced in Manchester called the MBacc (the Greater Manchester baccalaureate), which encouraged schools to tailor their curriculum to meet the needs of employers in the area, including manufacturing, engineering and construction.

Burnham said that in future the central government would "prioritise funding towards high-quality technical education and practical routes into work". The Department for Education would reallocate its budgets to spend on technical education.

Ministers will also change the way school performance is measured. Inspectors will be told to recognise schools that provide high-quality technical education and support young people so they can develop the skills, experience and confidence that employers want.

"For too long, we've built an education system around the idea that there's only one route to success: university, a degree, a desk," Burnham wrote.

"But somewhere along the way, we sent another message too: that if your ambition was to do something that required more technical skills, somehow you were aiming lower. That's why we're putting technical education back where it belongs — not as a second thought, but as a first choice."

The proposal is one of a series of announcements Burnham plans for his second week in Downing Street.

Tomorrow he is expected to set out plans to fast-track social care reforms. Yesterday he refused to rule out a so-called "death tax" to pay for the creation of a national care service.

On Friday he will set out proposals to devolve further tax and spending powers to regional mayors.

A YouGov survey for the Times has found the first evidence of a "Burnham bounce" after Labour drew level with Reform UK in the polls for the first time in almost 16 months.

Labour are on level-pegging with

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IN THE NEWS

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Charles aide to quit

The King's most senior aide is to step down next year. Sir Clive Alderton, principal private secretary to Charles and Camilla, has worked for the couple for 20 years. **Page 3**

Betrayal of bereaved

Robert Bush, a funeral director who has admitted preventing lawful burials, breached the trust of families on "an almost industrial scale", a court has heard. **Page 5**

Tourism clashes

Spanish police fired rubber bullets and charged protesters with batons when tens of thousands demanded greater controls on tourism in Palma de Mallorca. **Pages 22-23**

AI 'will not kill jobs'

AI will not destroy large numbers of jobs and instead will help to boost productivity, according to Sir Pascal Soriot, head of the pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca. **Page 27**

Chelsea on the hunt

Chelsea are hoping to sign the England midfielder Jordan Henderson on a free transfer from Brentford and also want Danny Welbeck of Brighton & Hove Albion. **Page 54**

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Today's highlights

9am **William Hague**, former Conservative leader, and **Kezia Dugdale**, former Scottish Labour leader
10.45am **Dr Nigel Fletcher** on his new book about Churchill and Elizabeth II
2.20pm **Sophie Winkleman** on audiobooks and schools
3.35pm The parents of **Natasha Ednan-Laperouse**, right, on the tenth anniversary of her allergy-related death

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TODAY'S EDITION

◆

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Are wildfires the new normal?

Wildfires have been ripping through towns and villages in France and Spain, forcing at least 325,000 people to flee. And now Britain may be facing its own wildfire crisis. What does the future hold?

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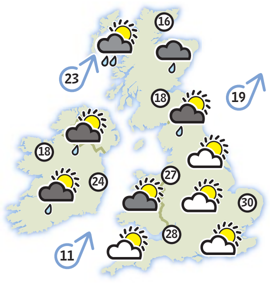

Hot and dry in the south. Heavy rain in Scotland; showers elsewhere. Mac 31C. **Full forecast, page 45**

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Iran war will keep gas prices high into winter and beyond

Emily Gosden Energy Editor

Gas prices are "almost guaranteed" to stay high through the winter and into next year as low levels of gas storage across Europe threaten a supply crisis, analysts have warned.

Households face continued high energy prices as a result, including a possible increase of more than £200 to the typical annual bill by the new year, industry estimates suggest.

Wholesale gas prices in Britain and Europe have risen by about 50 per cent since the middle of June, pushed up by conflict in the Middle East causing renewed disruption to shipments of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar through the Strait of Hormuz.

Wood Mackenzie, the energy consultancy, said the disruption combined with historically low levels of gas in storage in Europe, where stores are only slightly above half-full, meant Europe was "approaching energy crisis territory". Massimo Di Odoardo, vice-president for gas and LNG research at Wood Mackenzie, said: "Low European inventories, strong Asian demand and limited new LNG supply growth almost guarantee elevated prices through this winter and into 2027."

Wood Mackenzie said a similar price impact was likely in Britain as its wholesale gas market was closely correlated with the Continent's. The markets are linked by pipeline and compete for the same cargoes of LNG.

"Wholesale gas prices are a key component of retail gas prices, so ultimately any increase — or decrease — in the European wholesale price will feed through to consumers," Tom Marzec-Manser, Wood Mackenzie's European gas head, said.

Britain has significantly less gas storage capacity than its continental neighbours and "current fullness levels are 19 per cent below where they were this time in 2025", Marzec-Manser said.

However, this was offset by the fact that "Britain produces more gas than most EU countries and it is very well supplied with both Norwegian-piped gas and LNG". Marzec-Manser said: "To be clear, there is no risk to gas security of supply — gas will not run out — but to import all the [gas] needed, the price will have to rise."

Ofgem updates the price cap on standard gas and electricity tariffs every three months based on its assessment of costs suppliers are incurring. Prices rose by 13 per cent this month, taking a typical bill — using the energy regulator's new, lower estimate of typical consumption — to £1,663 a year.

British Gas and EDF, two of the country's biggest household suppliers, have published forecasts suggesting bills will rise in October and again in January, while Uswitch warned that cheap deals were already disappearing from the market. Sabrina Hoque, an energy expert at the price comparison website, said: "The cheapest deal available today is £111 more expensive than it was just two weeks ago."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Burnham's 'hard hat' reforms

Nigel Farage's party on 22 per cent of the vote, slightly ahead of the Tories on 21 per cent.

The biggest rise in support for Labour under Burnham has come from younger voters. Before Sir Keir Starmer resigned last month, only 14 per cent of 18-24-year-olds said they would vote for the party — a figure that has risen to 26 per cent.

The education reforms are likely to prove controversial because of concerns they could lead to less support for languages, arts and humanities as support and funding are channelled towards technical education.

But in his article Burnham said the present system was failing too many children and fuelling the number of Neets. "From today, Britain will value the hard hat every bit as much as the graduation cap," he wrote.

"Because getting that right is the difference between a generation of young people growing up with the belief that their talents can take them wherever they want to go, or growing up believing there was never a place for them to begin with.

"That's why I see this as more than just education reform. It's a different approach to welfare too. Instead of 16-year-olds leaving school with only dead ends, we're investing early — helping young people build successful working lives from the start."

Alan Milburn, the former health and social care minister, who is examining the youth unemployment crisis, has been increasingly looking overseas for a blueprint to reduce levels of worklessness. He said Burnham's reforms were "very welcome and a big step in the right direction".

'Death tax' may be resurrected, pages 6-7

Behind the story

A visit by the work and pensions secretary, Pat McFadden, to the Netherlands last month left him impressed (Ben Clatworthy writes).

He examined how workplace training, vocational colleges and "youth points" helped cut youth unemployment.

McFadden said: "Inactivity is a last resort, yet in the UK we all too often see young people signed off and written off, without engagement or support."

At a visit to a Jongerenpunt (youth point) in The Hague, McFadden was told what happened when students failed to turn up for lessons or training. "We go and knock on their door," a youth worker said. "It is often a case of tough love, but it works."

McFadden and Andy Burnham believe the rise in Neets is partly due to pupils skipping school because it does not meet their needs, and that a better range of GCSEs and hands-on work experience will make a big difference.

University isn't the only route to success

Andy Burnham
Comment

Travel a few miles anywhere in Britain and things begin to change. The accents, the food, the footy kits children wear — and the history too. Every place has its own story. But for all that diversity, we still educate our children as though every place is the same.

That is the legacy of choices Britain made decades ago. As power was centralised and industries disappeared, we didn't just lose jobs, we lost the ladders that helped young people climb into them. Local apprenticeships faded, technical education was pushed into the background and practical skills came to be seen as second class.

Today a million young people are not in education, employment or training (known as Neets). It would be easy to push the blame on them. Why don't they work a bit harder? Why don't they want it a bit more? But the truth is: they are and they do. What's holding them back isn't ambition, but the skills and experience to make the most of it. We know one of the key reasons we have a higher proportion of Neets than other countries is our relatively low take-up of technical education.

For too long we've built an education system around the idea that there's only one route to success: university, a degree, a desk. That opened doors for millions of people and rightly so. But we sent another message too: that if your ambition was to do something that required more technical skills, somehow you were aiming lower.

In the age of AI, practical and technical skills haven't become less valuable — they've become more valuable than ever. Our job is to rebuild those ladders of opportunity, rung by rung, step by step, together.

That's why we're putting technical education back where it belongs — not as a second thought, but as a first choice. From the age of 14, we will be giving children a new option in school: keeping core maths, English and science, but combining them with a real, hands-on technical education. This will include gaining work experience and creating connections with local employers.

These new routes won't be designed by Westminster. They'll be shaped by the people and places they serve. Working with mayors, local leaders, employers and schools, we'll identify the industries driving growth in local areas and make sure that local children have a clear route into them.

For the first time, technical education will be at the heart of our curriculum, not bolted onto the sides. And when a young person chooses a technical pathway, we'll celebrate it with the same pride as someone taking the academic one.

From today, Britain will value the hard hat every bit as much as the graduation cap. I see this as more than just education reform. It's a different approach to welfare too.

Instead of 16-year-olds leaving school with only dead ends, we're investing early — helping young people build successful working lives from the start.

To read the full version of this article visit thetimes.com

King's smooth operator with a sting quits after 20 years

Charles's top courtier, nicknamed 'the Wasp' by Harry, has had a ringside seat to history, writes **Kate Mansey**

MAX MUMBY/INDIGO/GETTY IMAGES

Sir Clive Alderton at the King's side at Sandringham in March, left, and following him out of St Paul's cathedral in May, above. Below left: greeting President Trump last year

The King's most senior aide, Sir Clive Alderton, is to step down next year, Buckingham Palace has announced.

The principal private secretary has worked for Charles and Camilla for 20 years but will stand down around his 60th birthday in May.

Described as a royal "chess player", Alderton, who has a remuneration package of about £300,000 a year, has received plaudits for helping to smooth the transition of the change of reign.

He helped the King deliver some of the biggest speeches of his reign, including his address to Congress on the state visit to the US in April and a landmark speech in Berlin when, in 2023, Charles became the first British monarch to address the Bundestag.

Knighted in the 2022 birthday honours list, Alderton's longevity has been a sign of the King's affection. Julian Payne, former communications secretary to the King, described Alderton as a "royal ringmaster" who "has had the great good fortune to be surrounded by some incredibly talented colleagues".

He added that Alderton was part of the "Golden Triangle, acting with the cabinet secretary and prime minister's principal private secretary as guardians of our unwritten constitution".

Valentine Low, former royal correspondent for The Times, wrote about Alderton in his book *Courtiers: The Hidden Power Behind the Crown*, describing him as "smooth, charming and humorous". Low added: "With his boyish face and floppy blond hair, he looks like a caricature of an English gentleman... Some people love Alderton, who fits the image of the polished diplomat-turned-courtier; others find him a touch too elusive. He has, they suspect, read his Machiavelli. 'Clive is a schemer, a chess player,' said one friend. 'He is a figure from *Wolf Hall* or *House of Cards*.'"

A career diplomat, Alderton has been in his post since 2006, bar a four-year stint as British ambassador to Morocco from 2012. At one point he was tipped to be the ambassador to Washington. He joined the Foreign Office in 1986 and served in Poland, Belgium, Singapore and France before joining the royal household in 2006, initially as deputy private secretary to Charles and Camilla, who were then Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall.

Alderton's current role includes preparing the daily red box of government papers for the King's attention. He is often seen by the King's side and was regarded as integral to the monarchy when he formed part of the walking procession behind the coffin during the state funeral of Elizabeth II in 2022.

Arguably one of the most consequential private secretaries of the modern era, Alderton went on to chair the coronation committee before the King and Queen were crowned side by side at Westminster Abbey in 2023.

Before Charles was crowned, Alderton played a key role in consolidating his many charities and handling the fallout from Michael Fawcett's departure as chief executive of the Prince's Foundation, after he was accused of offering to help a wealthy foreign businessman obtain citizenship in exchange for continuing donations.

As one of the UK's most senior diplomats, Alderton has had a ringside seat to history. During the general election campaign in 2024, he was seated next to Sir Keir Starmer at a state banquet for the visiting Emperor and Empress of Japan at Buckingham Palace.

While the King has relied on him, Alderton has not always found favour with other members of the royal family.

The Duke of Sussex saw Alderton as one of the "men in grey suits" at the palace. In his 2023 autobiography, *Spare*, Prince Harry did not refer to Alderton by name but appeared to nickname him "the Wasp", writing: "Without warning, he'd give you such a stab with his outsized stinger that you'd cry out in confusion." Some palace insiders, including some senior members of the family, saw Alderton as deeply unpopular and divisive.

Alderton will stay in post until spring or summer next year, overseeing his own "transition". The search for his successor is likely to include existing palace staff and external candidates.

The latest accounts show that Alderton, who has been on a long-term secondment from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, earned £240,000 to £245,000 for 2025-2026, with a total remuneration package of £305,000. His salary and pension are reimbursed to the Foreign Office by the sovereign grant, the public money that funds the work of the royal household. Records show that Alderton was provided with a grace-and-favour home "for the better performance of his duties with rent deducted from his salary". Staff are often allowed to remain in royal housing after retirement.

Wanted: a diplomat and counsellor who is fluent in royal speak

Julian Payne
Comment

Somewhere on the upper floors of Buckingham Palace sit the offices that make up the HR department for the royal household. And as of Monday, the team has a big job on its hands. With the news that Sir Clive Alderton has decided to step down from his role as principal private secretary to Their Majesties the King and Queen in the next year, the team must begin the search for his successor.

So, what are the qualifications to be the sovereign's right-hand man or woman?

Geopolitical experience is a must. The candidate will need an encyclopaedic knowledge of the politics, history and culture of the UK and the 14 other realms where the King is head of state, including Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Then there is religious understanding. As the King is supreme governor of the Church of England, any applicant must have an excellent theological and ecumenical understanding.

Next, we have the military. The King is head of the armed forces and an appreciation of the duty and service that goes into the nation's defences, and their history, is an absolute must. And finally, as well as privy counsellor one might perhaps add family counsellor. Given the role has to deal with the occasional bump involving a brother or perhaps a son, it doesn't hurt to have a good sense of how to advise in such moments. The role is seven days a week, all day every day except for an hour on Sundays, when Their Majesties are in church.

This is the job Sir Clive Alderton has been doing in different guises over the past 20 years.

So, who is this "man in a grey suit", as palace officials are sometimes dubbed? As a person, Alderton is marked by intuition, kindness and deep resilience. He takes time to welcome newcomers and their families when they come into the unique world of court life, as he did my own when I joined as communications secretary in 2016.

He has a well-developed sense of humour and a quick wit. Knowing how and when to make Their Majesties laugh is actually more important than you might think.

Alongside the softer skills sits a ferocious intelligence and drive. His ability to see round corners and anticipate problems is extraordinary. He can think through each challenge that they are facing and then anticipate the response to any decision taken and then the one after that and so on. Finally, you end up in an entirely theoretical future state but one that has an uncanny habit of coming true.

He is also extremely good at "speaking King". On an almost daily basis I would see people coming out of an audience with His Majesty utterly certain that he had just authorised one action or another only for Alderton to gently explain the difference between, as he would put it, a royal reaction and a royal decision. They are not necessarily the same thing.

Then there is the diplomacy. From the US and Canada to Europe, Asia, Oceania and even the Vatican, Alderton has faced huge diplomatic and organisational challenges. Whether that is maintaining close ties with the leaders of important countries or ensuring the King is not dragged into the politics of Westminster, there is never a day when the banana skins of public life are not laid at every turn.

It is worth saying, however, that Alderton does not operate alone. Working in the royal household is very much a team sport. Alderton has had the great good fortune to be surrounded by some incredibly talented colleagues. In Whitehall, there is the "golden triangle': he acts with the cabinet secretary and the prime minister's principal private secretary as guardians of our unwritten constitution. And within the household itself, a close working relationship with senior colleagues such as the lord chamberlain, the keeper of the privy purse and, of course, his redoubtable private secretary team, and so many others, ensures the essential glue continues to hold everything together.

Now, as he approaches 60 and begins to think about getting at least some of his mornings, evenings and weekends back, he can be satisfied with the achievements he has delivered for the King and Queen: the first accession to the throne in most people's living memory, the numerous state visits (including that recent highly successful trip to the US), a Commonwealth succession, a coronation and the emergence of Queen Camilla as a much-loved national treasure.

That feels like a track record any public servant can be proud of.

Julian Payne was communications secretary to the King and Queen, then the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall, for five years until 2021. He is now chief executive of Edelman EMEA

PHIL WILKINSON

Cross-country Youngsters from Lauder in the Scottish Borders take part in the Apprentice Rideout, a shortened version of the main Common Riding that will be held on Saturday. Dating back to the 1600s, Common Riding was a ceremonial blessing of land where town council members pledged allegiance to their lord

Bad behaviour normalised for Oxbridge professors, says head

Georgia Lambert

Inappropriate behaviour by professors at Oxbridge has been normalised, the provost of King's College has said, as the Cambridge college introduces measures to strengthen oversight of academics accused of sexual harassment and bullying.

The college has appointed a senior barrister to oversee an independent review of its institutional practices and wider culture and is strengthening its human resources processes, Gillian Tett, the college's head, told The Times.

"What's happened at King's has revealed a problem which has been bubbling up right across Oxford and Cambridge in recent years about sexual harassment and bullying," she said.

"There has been a culture in the past which was considered to be very normal, and not just in Cambridge but in much of the British establishment. But we're living in a new world where the younger generation is demanding — quite rightly — a much more inclusive culture of equality. That does not mean cancel culture, it does not mean going on witch hunts or finger-pointing. It's simply a way of signalling that it's time for us to get into the 21st century."

King's has taken action against two senior male academics. The college excluded Herbert Huppert, 82, emeritus professor of geophysics, last year after a series of complaints that included harassment, inappropriate touching, sexualised language and other misconduct.

Meanwhile, The Times revealed in April that Simon Goldhill, a former professor of Greek culture and literature at King's, was found to have sexually harassed a student in her twenties.

Goldhill, whose academic works include studies of sexuality in ancient Greece, admitted kissing the woman in a way that was "over-exuberant" and "no doubt slobbery".

External investigators found four breaches of university rules on sexual and professional conduct, and he resigned from the university last month. An investigation into Goldhill's conduct is ongoing. Goldhill and Huppert were approached for comment.

Gillian Tett, the provost of King's College, said she wanted it to be part of the solution

Tett said the two cases should not be conflated because one disciplinary process had concluded while the other was ongoing. She added that King's was "absolutely not unique" in facing scrutiny over sexual misconduct cases, but hoped the college could help drive wider reform.

In January, The Times revealed that Oxford had been accused of putting women's safety at risk by refusing to share details of an internal investigation into sexual harassment allegations against a senior professor with the relevant college, citing confidentiality.

Oxford said that existing data-sharing arrangements were being replaced by a new version, which colleges are signing over the summer, and should be in place across the university by the start of the next academic year.

The changes are part of wider reforms, including mandatory training and a review of its harassment policy. A spokesperson said that sexual harassment and bullying had "no place at Oxford".

In August last year, the Office for Students introduced rules requiring universities in England to prevent harassment and sexual misconduct. Institutions must improve reporting and support for students, ban non-disclosure agreements and introduce clear policies on staff-student relationships.

Amnesty boss agrees to meet gender-critical charity

Marc Horne

The chief executive of Amnesty International UK has agreed to meet representatives of a gender-critical charity after her predecessor said he was too busy to do so.

Kerry Moscogiuri's offer was in response to Maya Forstater, chief executive of Sex Matters, who had tried to organise a meeting with the British arm of the international human rights organisation but was rebuffed. The Amnesty International UK Charitable Trust is under investigation by charity regulators for publishing a report that condemned dozens of women's organisations as "anti-rights".

The briefing, which was later withdrawn, mentioned Sex Matters and Beira's Place, a centre for victims of sexual violence co-founded by JK Rowling, who has threatened to take legal action.

It prompted Sex Matters to write to Amnesty this month, urging it to "apologise to your gender-critical staff, supports and members of the public, as well as the individual groups smeared and to meet with us and others from women's rights and gay rights organisations to discuss our common interests in human rights and non-discrimination".

Moscogiuri has proposed reconciliation. She said Amnesty "regretted" uploading the briefing, which said gender-critical groups and activists were an "anti-rights movement" and a "growing threat". She added: "Its use of language does not reflect the position of Amnesty International UK, which is why it was promptly removed. We remain committed to defending human rights, including both the rights of women and the rights of trans people."

The Charity Commission said it was assessing concerns raised with it about the Amnesty briefing.

Quintagram® No 2631

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Domineering (5)

— — — — —

2 Having a deep resonant tone (5)

— — — — —

3 Prehistoric remnant (6)

— — — — — —

4 Flowers on a tree or bush (7)

— — — — — — —

5 Treated during manufacture (9)

— — — — — — — — —

A	B	B	B	C	D	E	E
F	I	L	L	M	O	O	O
O	O	P	R	S	S	S	S
S	S	S	S	S	S	Y	Y

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Three swimmers die

Three people died after getting into difficulty while swimming on Sunday. A father in his sixties and his daughter in her thirties were pronounced dead at Fistral Beach in Newquay, Cornwall. A man, 55, died at a beach in West Wittering, West Sussex, and a second man was taken to hospital. Sussex police said the men were not known to each other.

Protester spared prison

A pro-Palestinian protester who climbed Big Ben barefoot has avoided jail. Daniel Day, 30, of Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, caused "serious disruption" that cost taxpayers an estimated £92,000 after he scaled the landmark and sat on a ledge for 17 hours. He was handed a 14-month prison sentence suspended for two years at Southwark crown court.

Violin teacher in court

An "internationally recognised" violin teacher at the Royal College of Music sexually assaulted a prospective student during a private "taster" session in 2022, Southwark crown court heard. Jan Repko, 67, denies one count of sexual assault by touching and one count of assault by penetration of a woman over 16. The trial continues.

Assault by lobster

A man in his twenties was punched unconscious by someone dressed as a lobster outside the World Darts Championship at Alexandra Palace, north London, on December 13 last year. The Metropolitan Police has released a CCTV image of a person they are keen to question. The victim received serious injuries from which he is still suffering.

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Funeral director ‘breached trust of families on an industrial scale’

Sian Bradley

HUMBERSIDE POLICE

Images of the dead, left unburied or who weren’t cremated by Robert Bush. Family members described the trauma of the gruesome discovery at his funeral parlour

A grieving husband said “no punishment” of the funeral director Robert Bush could replicate his family’s suffering after discovering that he scattered a stranger’s ashes over his stepson’s resting place.

Bush, 48, will be sentenced this week after he admitted 67 charges, including fraud and preventing lawful burials, following the discovery of unburied bodies and ashes at a funeral parlour in Hull in 2024.

Christopher Paxton KC, for the prosecution, told Hull crown court that Bush, the former director of Legacy Independent Funeral Directors, breached the trust of families “on an almost industrial scale” while spending their money on himself.

The court heard yesterday that David Gorbutt had felt “abused” when he learnt Bush had given him a stranger’s ashes, despite an assurance they belonged to his late wife. Susan Gorbutt’s body was found at Legacy’s Hessle Road branch in Hull, 180 days after her death in September 2023.

In a victim impact statement read on his behalf, Gorbutt said: “I had scattered the wrong ashes ... I have had the uncertainty of not knowing who or what I have scattered over the ashes of Susan’s son. Who was that? One person? More than one? One word — ‘abused’ — springs to mind.

“There is no punishment suitable for him ... nothing can replicate the suffering inside he has caused.”

Gorbutt was one of several victims who described being haunted by their memories of Bush “smiling” as he handed over boxes of strangers’ ashes while leaving their loved ones unburied.

Rhea Burton told the court that Bush had praised as “brilliant” her family’s idea to put her grandfather David’s ashes into memorial jewellery and tattoo ink. In fact, the 77-year-old lay abandoned for 139 days.

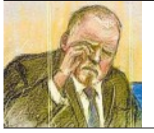
“We made necklaces so we would always have him with us,” Burton told the court. “Was Grandad actually in the coffin when we said goodbye? Whose ashes did we have?”

Most of the families still live in Hull. They described the lasting trauma of having to live near the premises on Hessle Road.

Byron Lill said he “can’t accept” that his mother, Muriel, was still lying there “only a matter of feet away” when Bush smiled and handed him a box of stranger’s ashes. Karen King told how her “lovely” father, Norman Bridger, 94, lay unburied in a cardboard casket for 323 days, still wearing the T-shirt in which he died.

“How could someone be so cruel?” King asked.

The conditions at Legacy’s funeral homes were uncovered when Bush asked directors from another funeral home, Evergreen, for help while he was on holiday in the US.


Robert Bush wept as the five-day sentencing hearing began at Hull crown court

A worker warned them: “You two don’t know the half of it. Bodies have been there for years.”

When police raided the premises, they uncovered 35 bodies in conditions Paxton described as “something like a horror scene”. Bush admitted turning off refrigeration units to save money, while marker pens were used to cover scrapes on coffins being reused for different services.

During the search a police officer found a brown paper bag containing a “tiny item”, which he initially thought was a baby bird but had two hospital wristbands wrapped around the waist with the words: ‘Baby of Jasmine Beverley, born on 13/05/22 at 05.04’.”

Beverley’s son, Sunny, was stillborn at about 18 weeks and she believed he had been given a funeral and cremated. Instead, Bush had kept her son’s remains on the cold room floor for almost two years.

Paxton told the court: “In this bag was a white cotton pad. It looked like a dressing-type pad used by hospitals.

“[The officer] opened the pad and inside was a tiny item which he initially thought was a baby bird. Although initially unsure, he suspected it was a human foetus.”

As the scandal of how Bush had been operating his business came to light, police told Beverley about her son.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4’s *Today* programme yesterday, she said: “I discovered that he was still in there almost two years after we’d had the funeral and had him cremated, which wasn’t the case. He was found inside the cold store on the floor in an envelope, and it was quite a distressing time to discover that what you thought had happened hadn’t actually happened.

“We’d always wondered where he’d been found, and we didn’t know whether or not it was with the rest of the people. When we found out he was there with everybody, it sort of gave me a little peace that he wasn’t on his own.”

Gorbutt’s statement said what happened to his wife would have been “her worst nightmare”, and that he felt sad, disappointed and guilty because he was unable to fulfil his wife’s last request to “deal with her death quickly and arrange her cremation as quickly as possible at her request, because as Susan would say: ‘You know I do not like the cold’.”

While industry bodies monitor funeral directors’ best practice and standards, there is no regulatory regime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. However, funeral directors providing pre-paid funerals are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

In the statement, Gorbutt said he became angry learning that the industry was unregulated.

“It is hard to believe a person needs more permits to sell burgers than to deal with the dead,” he said. “Why were no checks made and nobody raised any alarms before this?”

After the Bush case, demands are being made for rules and regulations for funeral directors over how bodies of the deceased are kept and looked after.

Financial records showed that almost £4 million passed through Bush’s accounts between 2017 and 2024 and that he either spent or transferred to his wife a total of £879,655.

Paxton said Bush “raised expectations, made false promises and stole cash donations intended for local and national charities” over 12 years, that he “misled the police of his preparedness to clear the backlog of bodies” and “chose not to deal with those bodies entrusted to him, but instead spend the money on himself and others”.

When he was arrested at the airport returning from Arizona, Bush told police: “I’ve f***ed it all up. Everything. My whole world.”

The hearing continues.

Law student remanded in custody over New IRA bomb plot

Ali Mitib

A law student accused of driving a bomb across Ireland as part of a suspected dissident republican terror attack has been remanded in custody.

Isobella Perrie Sullivan, 25, of Abbeylands Park in Clane, Co Kildare, was arrested at the scene after a bomb was intercepted in a car last Wednesday outside Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan, close to the border with Northern Ireland, where Irish police believe the device was destined. She was charged on Friday evening with possession of explosives in a special sitting of the Trim district court.

The “extremely significant” device, said to be one of the most advanced seen by Irish police since the end of the Troubles, was found during an intelligence-led operation by the gardai’s special detective unit into the New IRA. A man in his forties, who is alleged to be a member of the Dublin branch of the New IRA, the largest of the violent dissident republican groups opposing the Northern Ireland peace process, was also arrested as part of the operation.

Perrie Sullivan’s solicitor told a district court hearing on Friday that she had been asked to take a bag to the north and was unaware what was in it, adding she had been “manipulated”. She was granted bail with a host of conditions that included a €15,000 bond, the surrender of her passport, a curfew from 9pm to 7am, having a mobile phone on her at all times and signing in each day to a police station.

Isobella Perrie Sullivan was arrested in Co Monaghan last Wednesday

Yesterday Monaghan district court heard that Sullivan’s defence lawyer was not present and she would be remanded with consent to bail.

During the hearing, Perrie Sullivan, who appeared via video link from the Dochas Centre, a women’s prison in Dublin, wearing a white T-shirt featuring a “faith over fear” logo, told Judge Raymond Finnegan: “I thought I was getting out today with bail.”

The judge said he had not received an application to approve the surety. A garda officer told the court they were still making inquiries about the terms of the surety. She is set to appear before Monaghan district court on August 7.

The Irish army’s bomb disposal team was called to ensure the device was safe. Irish police said the “highly sophisticated” device contained a power unit, a detonator and explosives and was intended to be attached to the underside of another vehicle in Northern Ireland.

Justin Kelly, the garda commissioner, said on Friday: “What we found was an extremely significant seizure.”

Kelly said the force was continuing to deal with a “small minority” of “radicalised republicans”. Kelly said he was not surprised the suspect was in her twenties, given attempts to target a new generation. “This is a threat that we’re going to continue to face for some time,” he said.

The operation into the attempted bombing is being assisted by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Kelly said Irish police were liaising with MI5 to tackle the dissident threat.

‘Death tax’ may be resurrected

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor
Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Andy Burnham is looking at plans to introduce a basic level of free social care for all elderly people, as he failed to rule out a “death tax” to pay for the creation of a new national care service.

The prime minister did not deny he was considering a tax on estates to pay for the reforms as he prepares to outline his commitment to social care reform in a speech tomorrow.

Burnham will accelerate a review into the sector by Baroness Casey of Blackstock so that some changes can be implemented by the next election and launch a “national conversation” to get public backing for any reforms.

Burnham has said he wants to go as quickly as he can on social care, and has previously favoured a phased approach towards a universal service “operating on the NHS principle”. This will require a new model of funding and Burnham has championed replacing inheritance tax with a “national care levy” of 10 per cent on all assets after someone dies.

Yesterday Burnham refused to rule out introducing a care levy on all estates while Downing Street said it did not want to “get ahead” of his announcement. “You’ve seen his determination to tackle this issue, and I think that gives you a sense of where his feelings lie,” the prime minister’s spokesman said.

The government would have to find an extra £18.5 billion a year to fund a fully universal social care system providing care at the point of need, according to the Health Foundation, a think tank. Some experts believe fiscal constraints would make it impossible to achieve this by 2029, but that cheaper options could be implemented as a first step.

Under proposals he first set out in 2010, Burnham said the “first stage” of a national care service should be offering “free personal care” to all those who needed it. This would mean that, regardless of wealth, for the first time every adult would be entitled to a basic level of state-funded help with eating, washing and using the lavatory in their own homes. This system, which is in place in Scotland, would cost £6.5 billion a year in England if launched this year.

Eligibility for social care is strictly means-tested and anybody with more than £23,250 in assets has to pay for the entirety of care themselves.

Hugh Alderwick, the director of policy and research at the Health Foundation, said offering free personal care would be a “stepping stone” towards a universal system. “Free personal care is an example of how you would offer something for everyone, some kind of universal system, as soon as possible,” he added. “A staged approach would make sense given that public finances are tight. But we need to be really clear what the final vision is.”

However, Alderwick said, unlike a cap on social care costs, free personal care would not solve the issue of some people facing “catastrophic” care home fees in their final years. One in seven individuals face lifetime care costs of more than £100,000.

Casey had not been due to issue her final report on how to fund social care until 2028, but this will be brought forward by Burnham, which Alderwick said was essential to “build momentum” for change.

Yesterday, Burnham said he wanted “cross-party talks” on the future of social care, adding: “No party is in a position where they’ve got the high ground — we’ve all failed on this issue over decades and the pressure now on the National Health Service as a result of that failure is huge.”

Ed Davey, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, has written to Burnham and said he is willing “to work together across party lines to fix social care”.

However, Kemi Badenoch has said the Conservatives will support reform only if it is funded by spending cuts to welfare, not taxes. Nigel Farage, the Reform UK leader, said: “This is a tax on the lower-middle classes who have already spent a lifetime paying into the system. Reform UK will fight a death tax every step of the way.”

In an interview with the BBC’s Laura Kuenssberg on Sunday, Burnham said he wanted to fast-track some of the reforms within two years, arguing there were “major changes” that could be made before the next election.

He said: “It’s very personal to me. This costs the NHS billions of pounds and we will never get the NHS back to good waiting time standards until we fix social care ... I believe broken social care is the biggest cause of corridor care in the NHS. It’s the biggest cause of billions being spent on people unnecessarily going into hospital.”

During the Makerfield by-election campaign in June, Burnham told The Guardian that he would “look at all of the kind of implications” regarding inheritance tax and care changes.

Tackle state spending to provide funding for care, leading article, page 21

Analysis

There have been 22 failed attempts at reforming adult social care since 1997 (Eleanor Hayward writes). For the 23rd effort to work, it will require a fundamentally different approach by Andy Burnham.

Baroness Casey of Blackstock, who is leading an independent commission on adult social care, has said previous proposals failed because they did not have public backing. Burnham has experience of this. When, in 2009, he proposed funding a national care service via a new levy on estates, it was dubbed a “death tax” and furiously opposed by Conservatives, killing off any prospect of reform.

A proposal by Theresa May to make people pay for care if they had more than £100,000 in assets was characterised as a “dementia tax” and contributed to the Conservatives losing their parliamentary majority in the 2017 election.

Speaking this month at the Local Government Association, Casey outlined how governments had not “secured public consent for the hard choices [social care reform] involves”. She explained: “Without public consent, each time we get close, the debate narrows and becomes caricatured. Everyone remembers the death tax and the dementia tax.”

This week, Burnham will launch a “national conversation” asking people how they think social care should be funded, and how much individuals should have to contribute. Options include a cap on lifetime costs, first proposed in the Dilnot report in 2011 which said no one should have to pay more than £35,000 in their lifetime. A costs cap of £86,000 was proposed by Boris Johnson in 2019, but went on the scrapheap alongside other social care proposals.

There is no shortage of detailed policy proposals for how to reform social care. The hardest bit for Burnham will be picking one and sticking to it.

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As Andy Burnham met President Zelensky, Rishi Sunak shared an uplifting

Labour enjoying bounce in the polls

Patrick Maguire, Oliver Wright

Labour is on course for a landslide victory in the Greater Manchester mayoral election as opinion polls showed the party reaping the benefits of a “Burnham bounce”.

Bev Craig, the Labour candidate to succeed Andy Burnham as mayor, is comfortably ahead of Reform UK’s Sian Astley in the race for control of the most powerful elected office outside London, according to a survey by More in Common.

Craig would win 39 per cent of first preference votes to Astley’s 19 per cent were the mayoral election held tomorrow, the poll suggests. She would beat Reform by a 30-point margin of 65 per cent to 35 per cent once second preferences were taken into account.

Another poll released yesterday, by YouGov for The Times, found Labour have drawn level with Nigel Farage’s Reform UK nationally. Both were on 22 per cent, with the Conservatives on 21 per cent. The survey of 2,328 adults, conducted on July 26 and 27, suggests that Labour’s support has increased by 4 percentage points since Sir Keir Starmer announced his resignation last month, and that Reform’s share of the vote has fallen by 3 points.

It also shows that the youngest voters have responded most enthusiastically to the change of prime minister. Last month, 14 per cent of 18 to 24-year-olds said they would vote Labour. That has risen to 26 per cent.

The spike in support for Labour under Burnham appears to have come largely at the expense of the Green Party. Since June 22, its support has dropped from 15 per cent to 13 per cent.

Luke Tryl, More in Common’s UK director, said Labour’s support could rise. He told The Times: “This vote is both one of the first electoral tests of Burnham’s legacy in Greater Manchester and an early verdict on his premiership.

“With the caveat that much of the fieldwork was conducted before he became prime minister — and we may yet see a further boost in support for Labour — the data is already looking highly positive: a majority of Greater Manchester residents say Andy Burnham has changed the area for the better, and half believe he’ll be a good prime minister.

“It’s striking how little difference there is between voter groups regarding Burnham’s legacy: even those planning to vote for Reform in this by-election tend to say that Burnham was good for Greater Manchester, although they are far less convinced that he’ll be a good prime minister.”

More in Common surveyed 1,003 adults in Greater Manchester between July 11 and 23.

Yesterday, Burnham appointed Bridget Phillipson, the equalities minister, as the Labour Party chairwoman. He said Phillipson “will help drive the culture change our party needs” and “play a vital role in ensuring the Labour Party is match fit for the next election”.

Four days in and Andy’s sweating the small stuff

Tom Peck
Political Sketch

Is Andy Burnham hiding from the media? If you somehow move from being mayor of Greater Manchester to prime minister without holding a single press conference, or taking part in a single TV interview, it’s not surprising people might accuse you of such a thing.

At this point in his political journey, Burnham has faced fewer media questions than either Liz Truss or Pol Pot. The morning after he became MP for Makerfield, he hid from the media as they chased him through the side door of a café at a non-league football ground.

But now we know he’s not been hiding at all. When he was formally declared leader of the Labour Party last Friday, who was hanging around backstage, whispering into the camera but the BBC’s Laura Kuenssberg? When he walked through the famous door of No 10 last Monday, whose was the first face arranged to be waiting on the other side? Kuenssberg again.

We know this because this series of historic meetings between Burnham and Kuenssberg has been deployed in a montage-style introduction to the prime minister’s first sit-down TV interview. It took place at Burnham’s new home from home, Heron House in Manchester, which we are sadly compelled to describe as “No 10 North”.

It might only be me, but Heron

to give elderly free social care

PAUL DEVLIN/GETTY IMAGES; SIMON JONES/PA

photo of the Wensleydale Heifers and Lord Cameron posed with Jerry Kelly, the 2026 Senior Open winner, at Gleneagles

House seems like an unfortunate choice of location. I can't see it or hear it without thinking of Mick Herron, the writer of *Slow Horses*, and imagine No 10 North as a home from home for incompetent civil servants who unfortunately know too much to be fired.

But still, there was Burnham, and there was Kuenssberg. Out the window was Manchester, and on the 48-inch TVs in the meeting room, someone had uploaded a screensaver of the number "10" from the famous door on Downing Street, behind which Burnham has declared he does not intend to live.

So where is he living? It's conceivable that at the end of a long day of radically reforming Britain and also filming TikTok videos about his favourite bar snacks, he unfolds a futon mattress and beds down for the night right there, beneath the Manchester skyline and the pictures on the glowing plasmas of his home far away.

Kuenssberg's first line of inquiry concerned Donald Trump, with whom he'd had his first phone call last week. "It was a good call, it was a warm call, it got us off to a good start," he said. "I always judge people as I find them, and I found him to be completely warm." It's an endearing trait to judge people as you find them, but would it be bad to bring in a bit of the president's well-known contributions to public life over the last several decades?

He was asked whether appointing John Healey as chancellor meant he was committed to increasing defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP, that being the issue Healey resigned over as defence secretary. "The first challenge facing us both is to make sure the defence investment plan is fully funded," he said. "We have to work that through." A fascinating answer. The defence investment plan, and the insufficient amount of investment to be found within it, is the very thing that, rather than "work through", his now chancellor resigned over.

The prime minister spoke in big pictures, addressing the broad issues that create the problems that it is now his job to solve. Will he fix the nation's social care crisis, with a plan for social care by the next election? "I will go as quickly as I can," he said. It didn't help that he was trying to describe doing something quickly but said it very slowly. The slowing speech is the key Burnham tell, and we can expect to see plenty of it. The slower the words leave his lips the more untethered they are from the truth. We got an impassioned diagnosis of all the ways in which dysfunctional social care cripples the NHS. But we didn't get a plan for how it might be made right. "I'm only four days in," he told Kuenssberg, with his head cocked to one side, and his mouth split open into a charmer's smile.

He is only four days in, but he first came to Westminster more than a quarter of a century ago. He's been dreaming of these four days all his adult life. He's wasted no time in finding answers to the small stuff, like nanoscopic cuts to energy bills and reinstating the Tory party's £2 bus fare cap. He must find answers to the big stuff, and four days in politics is longer than he thinks.

Burnham rules out scrapping council tax and stamp duty

Ben Clatworthy Whitehall Editor

Andy Burnham has ruled out scrapping council tax and stamp duty and replacing them with a new property tax.

The prime minister was examining replacing the taxes with an annual charge based on property values, according to reports. Burnham has insisted the changes "won't be happening" but did pledge to "make taxation fairer".

It is understood Burnham was given a policy paper arguing that replacing the taxes with a "single flat rate of 0.48 per cent of a property's value" would mean a tax cut for 19 million low and middle-income households — 77 per cent of the housing stock.

However, when asked about the suggestion, Burnham said: "That won't be happening. I don't know actually where some of the stories that have appeared over the last 24 hours have come from.

"It seems that somebody within, I don't know, 100 yards of me can say something and then all of a sudden it's my policy. Or someone can pass me something and then I support everything within the document. It's not the case that we are bringing forward plans on that scale at this moment in time."

Under the proposals, submitted by the Fairer Share Campaign, such a scheme would result in a £556 annual tax cut for 19 million households. For the remaining six million to seven million households, their tax bill would either rise or remain unchanged. The rate of increase for those affected would be capped at £1,200 a year until the property was sold.

Downing Street said it was not true that the prime minister was actively considering removing council tax.

Stamp duty is paid on property sales upwards of £125,000. First-time buyers benefit from not having to pay the levy on purchases up to £300,000. However, the relief ends at £500,000.

Burnham used his first big interview as prime minister to criticise the unfairness of the council tax system, telling the BBC there were "big decisions ahead". He added: "What we're trying to do … is to make taxation fairer. I removed VAT off electricity bills, said we would do that, and that will come through later in the year. We are looking at how we take that little bit of pressure off people's shoulders, reduce the cost of living."

Burnham had previously said he was "persuaded" of the argument for reforming the property tax system.

Speaking to the BBC, he said: "There are people here in Greater Manchester who pay a much higher council tax than people living in much larger homes in London. So Rachel Reeves was right to start to reform council tax to create some fairness there in relation to people in homes that are of much greater value, who haven't seen their council tax go up over the years because of the failure to revalue the banding."

Labour has come under pressure from backbenchers to reform council tax, including from Jonathan Brash, chairman of the cross-party group of MPs on council tax reform. The Labour MP for Hartlepool told the i Paper "wholesale reform" was needed.

Brash said: "Council tax is one of the most unfair taxes in Britain, and nowhere is that injustice clearer than in towns like Hartlepool."

The Conservatives claimed Labour was "looking for more ways to tax middle England". Sir James Cleverly, the shadow housing secretary, said: "Andy Burnham and Labour are just looking for more ways to tax middle England and raise taxes on people's homes.

"Replacing council tax and stamp duty with a new house-price tax would not be a tax cut for hardworking families. Quite the reverse — people across England would end up paying more."

Burnham said: "We need to honour the manifesto upon which Labour was elected, and if I was to bring forward any changes, obviously people would rightly say, 'Well, is this consistent with that manifesto?'"

PM tells Zelensky: I am with Ukraine 100 per cent

Ben Clatworthy

A visit by President Zelensky to a naval base in Portsmouth yesterday sent a "clear message" of Britain's support for Ukraine, Andy Burnham said.

The prime minister said it was "no accident" that the Ukrainian president was the first foreign leader to come to the UK since he took power, and that he intended to visit Ukraine soon.

The pair visited the naval base, where Burnham announced that Britain would hand over the intellectual property behind its new Stone Cloak electronic warfare system, enabling Ukraine to produce the technology at scale. The tablet-sized device is designed to block Russian detection of the drones it is fitted to. The Ministry of Defence has already given thousands to Ukrainian forces.

Burnham said the UK could be counted on "for as long as it takes", adding: "Volodymyr, you are the first leader I have welcomed in person since taking office, and that is no accident. It is intended to send a very clear message: we are with Ukraine 100 per cent, I am personally with you 100 per cent."

Zelensky responded that the relationship between the two countries was "stronger than ever", and thanked Burnham for his commitment.

The prime minister said earlier yesterday: "Britain stands with Ukraine, shoulder to shoulder, and our support remains unwavering."

The leaders met more than 200 Ukrainian military personnel who have spent the past three weeks in the UK taking part in Exercise Sea Breeze, aimed at strengthening war-fighting capabilities in the Black Sea.

Conflicts in Ukraine and Middle East are converging, leading article, page 21

STEVE BACK

Feisty feline Larry the cat, the long-serving Downing Street mouser who has seen off half a dozen prime ministers, tangles with a police sniffer dog outside No 10

Victims of paedophile fear he could be set for early release

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

When Kayleigh received the news last month that her father could be released early from prison, it felt like all of her hard work was being undone.

Along with her fellow victim Marie, she had campaigned successfully to change the law to ensure that paedophiles would spend at least two thirds of their sentence behind bars.

While the change in the law would not apply retrospectively to include people such as Harry Miah, her biological father who had sexually abused them multiple times as girls and would be released halfway through his sentence, they felt they had achieved a victory for future victims.

"We were really proud of that, although it wouldn't affect us," Kayleigh said. "It's still quite soul destroying having to go through that, and it was worth it to fight for future victims."

But now she feels her efforts counted for nothing after she received a call that has turned her life upside down and driven her back into campaign mode.

Not only will sex offenders once again be eligible for release after serving just half of their sentence, but last month she received a call from the Probation Service telling her that Miah could be released even earlier thanks to Labour's early release scheme.

His original release date was due to be in September 2027 after serving just half of his 18-year sentence. The early release scheme will allow some prisoners to be released after serving as little as a third of their sentence in prison.

"Now I feel like our work was wasted," Kayleigh said. "When you go through something like this, it depletes you in every aspect, emotionally, physically, mentally and then it takes time to have to build yourself back up again.

"So last month, when we received the phone call to say you are going to receive a letter, obviously it came out in the headlines as well, that was heartbreaking for me. The fact that they'd completely overturned all the hard work that we had already done."

Miah was sentenced for multiple counts of sexual abuse against Kayleigh and Marie who have both waived their right to anonymity to speak to The Times. This included the offences of indecency with a child, inciting a child to engage in sexual activity, one count of attempted rape and possession of extreme pornography. It took more than 27 years after Kayleigh was first abused by Miah to get justice. She was aged six when he blindfolded her and carried out sexual acts on her.

Harry Miah was sentenced to 18 years for abusing Kayleigh, above, and Marie

She reported the abuse to police but it was not until many years later when they received reports from a second victim — Marie — that Miah was charged and prosecuted.

Marie had been sexually assaulted by Miah for four years. The abuse started when she was 11 and he was her council-provided taxi driver to the school she attended in East Sussex.

"I'm absolutely destroyed, heartbroken, devastated and frustrated with the whole system," Marie said. "I feel let down and I don't have any faith in the process at all." Marie said she has had sleepless nights thinking about his release, which have exacerbated severe mental health problems that she has suffered ever since the abuse.

Kayleigh and Marie are hoping Andy Burnham's decision to pause the early release scheme while the government considers changes will lead to paedophiles such as Miah staying in prison.

The scheme is expected to come into effect later this year in some form, given the imperative to create enough room to stop prisons running out of space again. Efforts have turned to excluding the most dangerous and serious criminals from benefiting from the scheme.

The Conservatives have called for paedophiles to be excluded from the scheme, a proposal backed by growing numbers of Labour MPs. Today Kemi Badenoch, the Tory leader, will call on Burnham to introduce emergency legislation to stop the early release of paedophiles and rapists.

She will say the prime minister should recall parliament to ensure nobody is freed from jail on September 2, when the law change is due to come into effect.

However, the Ministry of Justice said it did not need to pass new legislation to delay the implementation of the scheme beyond September 2.

Today, Kayleigh and Marie will be among a group of victims who are planning to present a letter to Downing Street demanding Burnham scrap the early release scheme altogether.

While they wait to hear the outcome of the prime minister's review of the scheme, Kayleigh and Marie have been left in a state of purgatory. They were not even told with any certainty when his new release date could be.

Miah's home is a five-minute drive from where Kayleigh lives. She has family nearby and fears she will encounter him on a regular basis after his release from prison.

Kayleigh said she would spend the next year living in fear for the day her abusive father is released from prison, adding: " It's scary. He's violent. He's exceptionally violent. And all I was told on the phone and in the letter is the possibility that he could be released early.

"We don't have time to put anything in place that should be in place before a perpetrator leaves prison. I don't know how the government is planning to manage that really."

Marie said: "I've had sleepless nights and mental health problems throughout and I think his release is going to increase the anxiety because I don't know where he's going to live, I have no idea when he'll be out. I fear bumping into him in the supermarket.

"This man needs to be put somewhere on the other side of the country so I never see this guy ever again."

Inquiry into power grid sidelines boss

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor

The boss of Britain's electricity grid operator has been sidelined from an investigation into whether it tried to cover up blackout concerns during last month's heatwave, after questions were raised over the inquiry's independence.

Fintan Slye, chief executive of the National Energy System Operator (Neso), had been due to receive "regular updates of progress" under terms of reference published by the company. But revised terms have removed him, in addition to the company's lawyers acting as a go-between with investigators.

The investigation, by the law firm Eversheds Sutherland, is examining claims Neso doctored operational records to dodge freedom of information laws and that its corporate affairs team interfered in control room decisions during last month's heatwave, when the grid came under severe strain.

The climbdown came after a fortnight of pressure from Claire Coutinho, the shadow energy secretary. In a letter to Miatta Fahnbulleh, the new energy secretary, she accused Neso of having "misled the press, their own staff, and potentially ministers".

The revised terms give staff a confidential email address and phone line to contact investigators. Neso said its executive would not be shown the inquiry's findings until they were final.

Green leader shares Farage 'guillotine'

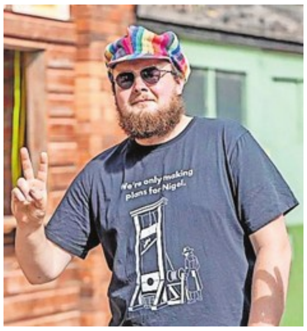
Daisy Eastlake Political Reporter

Reform UK has reported Zack Polanski, the Green Party leader, to police after he shared a photograph of a man in a T-shirt featuring an illustration of a guillotine alongside the message: "We're only making plans for Nigel", in an apparent reference to Nigel Farage.

The post appeared on Polanski's Instagram account after a fundraising event in Bristol. Polanski has since removed the post. A party spokesman said: "After attending a public event, Zack accepted a request to collaborate on a post with several images. Once this image was brought to his attention he immediately unshared the post. He unequivocally does not support this type of dangerous message."

Reform UK accused Polanski of "incitement to murder" for sharing the post. Farage said that he would "expect to be arrested" if he posted a similar photo.

The Metropolitan Police said it was investigating the report.


We're only making plans for Nigel.

The picture posted by Zack Polanski

Audiobooks should play part in learning to read, teachers told

Georgia Lambert

Audiobooks and podcasts should no longer be treated as an optional extra in schools but become a core part of every child's reading journey, experts say.

A study by the National Literacy Trust, a charity, and the publisher Penguin Books found that almost half of children and young people regularly listened to audio, which experts argue should be embraced by schools alongside traditional reading.

The research was based on surveys of 110,114 children aged eight to 18 and 3,000 parents of children aged five to 18. It found that 47.3 per cent of children and young people listened to audio content this year, while 69.2 per cent of parents said someone in their household listened to audiobooks.

Podcasts were the most popular format among young listeners: 49.1 per cent listened exclusively to podcasts and 28.7 per cent listened to both podcasts and audiobooks, while 22.3 per cent listened only to audiobooks. More than 28 per cent of children said listening to audio increased their interest in reading books, while 30 per cent of audiobook listeners said they helped them understand stories when they found reading difficult.

While engagement in audio content has risen steadily in recent years, from 39.4 per cent in 2023 to 42.3 per cent in 2024, the latest research suggests audio has become firmly embedded in children's daily lives. Researchers said that, for the first time, more children and young people now engaged with audio content than read for enjoyment.

Jonathan Douglas, chief executive of the National Literacy Trust, said: "Audio is much more than an alternative to print — it is another powerful route into stories, knowledge, and reading for enjoyment." He added: "We need to ensure that high-quality audio is a core part of every child's reading journey – at home, in school, and in the community – not just an optional extra."

Nadia Shireen, a National Literacy Trust ambassador and author of *Barbara Throws a Wobbler*, said: "There can sometimes be a feeling that listening to an audiobook somehow 'doesn't count' ... but I couldn't disagree more. It's really useful to now have the data that backs up the value of audiobooks.

"If our aim is to get as many people as possible to connect with stories, we mustn't ignore the power of oral storytelling — we've been doing it for centuries, after all."

JAMIE WILLIAMSON

Friends, Romans Garrowhill Bowling Club held its "bowls through the ages pageant and tournament", part of the Commonwealth Games 2026 festival in Glasgow

Briton makes history at maths Olympiad with a perfect score

Tom Whipple

There was a question on combinatorics, which Alex Chui admits he found a bit tricky. But he got full marks. There was a question on geometry that was good fun. He got full marks on that too.

Overall? Well, Chui said, after nine hours of problems, he found the toughest school-age maths exam in the world "very enjoyable".

And, as the British competitor finished with a perfect score, he had also become the most successful International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) competitor in history. This week, in Shanghai, Chui, in year 13 at Tonbridge School, was awarded a gold medal — his seventh medal in the annual event.

It was a "formidable achievement", Dominic Yeo, a senior lecturer in mathematics at King's College London and leader of the British team, said.

More so because to win medals in seven successive years was only possible because he entered his first competition at the start of secondary school. "Being at that level at age 11 and 12 is truly remarkable," Yeo added.

The IMO is considered the pre-eminent proving ground for the world's future professional mathematicians. Each year, countries around the world enter a team of their six top school-age mathematicians, where they will attempt six problems over two days.

The British team is selected after a series of examinations held by the UK Maths Trust. Historically, most of the UK team — who this year came eighth — will go on to study maths at Cambridge.

Globally, winners of the Fields Medal, the maths equivalent of the Nobel, are often former IMO competitors. Of the four mathematicians who won the Fields Medal this week, two previously won medals in the IMO and one in the equivalent computer science competition.

Along with Chui, 55 of the 666 contestants taking part won gold medals.

Alex Chui won a record seventh medal at the annual event held in Shanghai

"This year was particularly meaningful for me as it was my final IMO, which brought some extra pressure because I wanted to make the most of my last opportunity to compete," Chui said.

"However, once the competition began, I focused on enjoying the problems and the experience itself."

He added that his love of maths began young.

"I remember learning about prime numbers in primary school and being fascinated that such simple objects could have such unexpected properties. I started taking part in maths competitions from an early age, and doing well in them gave me confidence that I could tackle more challenging problems.

"This eventually led me to join Olympiad training when I was nine, where I began exploring mathematics in much greater depth," he said, adding that he was looking forward to university-level maths, when he begins at Cambridge next year.

Big city loses its appeal as Gen Zers stay close to home

Sanchez Manning
Social Affairs Correspondent

The days of ambitious young upstarts heading to the bright lights of the big city to make their fortune may be numbered, according to a poll.

Almost half of Gen Zers say they are choosing to stay in their own communities rather than moving to London or other big cities to begin their careers after completing their education, the research found.

The poll by research firm Opinium, commissioned by Coca-Cola Great Britain, surveyed more than 2,000 UK adults over a week in June this year. It found that 44 per cent cited a desire to be close to their families as a reason for wanting to stay put, while 27 per cent said a more affordable cost of living was the driving factor.

The findings also gave broader indications of how the ambitions of Gen Z may have changed compared with previous generations. Nearly three in five (58 per cent) said they were considering more vocational job opportunities and over half — 52 per cent — were thinking about following in their parent's footsteps by, for example, joining a family business or entering a trade.

The shift reflects the tendency of young people to remain in the family home for longer as the rising cost of living makes it less affordable to move out.

Researchers from the UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies previously analysed data from 10,000 Gen Zers taking part in its Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) and found that 68 per cent were still living with their parents at the age of 23 — three times the number of millennials living at home a decade earlier.

The findings echo the increasing popularity among young people of vocational and trade jobs, as fears grow that AI will soon render many white collar roles obsolete. Of those considering following in family footsteps, 32 per named financial stability as one of the benefits and 29 per cent said it gave them a clearer route into the workforce.

Lewis Baker, 17, who joined Coca-Cola as an apprentice and works alongside his father at the company's Wakefield site in West Yorkshire, told the researchers: "Joining the team felt like I was following in my family's footsteps. He's been there for 25 years, and working alongside him has taught me so much — not just about the job, but the pride people take in making something that's part of everyday life for families and businesses."

Dusan Stojankic, vice-president and general manager of Great Britain and Ireland at Coca-Cola, said: "This research shows a clear shift in how younger people are thinking about work and ambition."

We must hold firm, Macron tells firefighters

David Chazan Saint-Jean d'Illac

Bone-dry pine trees burnt like matchwood, sending columns of thick black smoke billowing over Saint-Jean-d'Illac, a rural area barely nine miles from Bordeaux.

Overhead, a reconnaissance helicopter circled the blaze, directing a water-bombing aircraft to its target.

Moments before each drop, a siren on board the helicopter sounded — a warning to the firefighters below to take cover.

"The sirens ensure that we stay safe on the ground and avoid any injuries," said Matthieu Jomain, a commander with the Gironde fire brigade.

The advance of wildfires in south-western France slowed yesterday after overnight rain and a lull in the wind. "The fire is more stable today than it was in previous days. It's not moving closer to Bordeaux," Jomain said.

He cautioned, however, that the respite may prove fleeting. A renewed heatwave this week is expected to push temperatures to 38C or 40C. "This is a moment of false calm," he said. "We are likely to be fighting these fires for some time — weeks, perhaps even months before they are fully extinguished."

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There was criticism of President Macron for visiting Gironde firefighters

Around the blaze in Saint-Jean-d'Illac, local farmers and emergency workers have bulldozed trees to create a buffer zone in the hope of halting the advancing wall of flames.

President Macron travelled to Gironde and delivered a stark warning to firefighters, soldiers and police officers battling the blazes. "The coming weeks are going to be tough and we must hold firm," he said. "This battle, we are going to win it together, this is the priority."

He added: "We owe a lot to the firefighters. We are infinitely grateful to them. I know that these past few days have been very wearing. We are facing a totally unprecedented fire, the hardest since the Second World War."

In a reference to mounting criticism of what many regard as the government's failure to prepare properly, Macron said: "I do not underestimate the anger."

In Bordeaux, some residents questioned the timing of his visit, as crews raced to contain the fires before temperatures climb again. "There's a risk that the high temperatures could reignite fires that have died down, or spark new ones," Jomain said.

Chantal, 46, a hairdresser in Bordeaux who declined to be identified by her surname, said the president should have waited until the crisis was brought under control before visiting the region.

"I think his presence will distract people from focusing on the job in hand and divert badly-needed resources from firefighting to showing him around and keeping him safe," she said.

Macron had earlier thanked France's European partners for their "valuable support", naming Romania, Croatia, Germany, Portugal, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Switzerland.

Croatia has deployed two water-bombing aircraft and Swiss firefighters have joined French crews on the ground.

Questions have also been raised locally about preparedness. Stéphane Lafitte, 52, who was evacuated from his home in Saint-Médard-en Jalles on Friday night, asked: "Why do we not have more firefighting planes? Was it a question of cost? With climate change, everyone knows the risk is growing — and this fire is larger than anything we've seen before."

The blaze in Gironde, the department where Bordeaux is located, has already consumed an area four times the size of Paris. "It's the biggest disaster of this kind that France has ever known," said Wilfried Schneider, a fire brigade spokesman.

Laurent Nuñez, the French interior minister, described the fire as "unprecedented" and exceptionally difficult to contain. "It is autonomous, self-sustaining, and spreads in all directions," he said. "We have to remain very concentrated, very determined."

Scientists say the fire was now interacting with the atmosphere itself. Francesca Di Giuseppe, of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, said it had begun to generate its own weather systems.

Several pyrocumulonimbus clouds — so-called "fire thunderstorms" — have been observed. These form when intense heat drives smoke and moisture high into the atmosphere, where cooling air causes condensation and cloud formation.

Under certain conditions, the clouds can develop into full thunderstorms, producing lightning capable of igniting fresh fires far beyond the original blaze. Rain may also fall, though it often evaporates before reaching the ground.

The result is a fire that not only spreads, but reshapes the conditions around it — compounding the challenge facing those attempting to contain it.

'Extreme risk' across much of Spain

Tom Gould

Spanish firefighters are struggling to control raging wildfires in the regions of Madrid and Valencia before a new heatwave expected to hit tomorrow.

Temperatures of up to 42C would cause the fire risk to reach "very high or extreme levels" across most of Spain, the country's meteorological agency Aemet said yesterday.

Pedro Sánchez, Spain's prime minister, said: "I ask for understanding and call on all citizens ... to exercise extreme caution and take every possible precaution." He warned there were "difficult hours, complex hours" ahead.

The authorities have evacuated almost 80,000 people from ravaged areas west of the capital and near Valencia, in the east. Another 30,000 have been confined to their homes.

The flames outside Madrid were said to have "slowed their advance" overnight between Sunday and yesterday but the regional government stressed the fire remained a threat.

Yesterday afternoon efforts near the capital were concentrated on a "very aggressive" front to the north of the San Juan reservoir on the River Cofio. Isabel Díaz Ayuso, president of the Community of Madrid, described the situation as chaotic.

In La Vall d'Uixó, in the Castellon province of northern Valencia, firefighters were facing the added threat of unexploded ordnance left behind from the Spanish Civil War that could detonate if the flames reached it, Chevi Bolumar, the fire chief of the Valencian regional government, told the public broadcaster RTVE.

The Valencian regional government's minister for emergencies, Juan Carlos Valderrama, said yesterday the fire in La Vall d'Uixó had been contained but was "neither stabilised nor under control".

More than 170,000 hectares have been destroyed by forest fires in Spain so far this year, an area larger than the size of Greater London. This figure was six times higher than at the same time last year, according to Sara Aagesen, the minister for ecological transition and demographic challenge.

FERNANDO SÁNCHEZ/EUROPA PRESS/AVALON; 2026 PLANET LABS PBC, UME/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; SOPHIE GARCIA/EPA; FLORION GOGA/REUTERS

Left, a resident of Piedralaves, usually a picturesque village in northeast Spain outside her father's destroyed house; above, a satellite photograph of Lège-Cap-Ferret in Gironde, France; right, firefighters battling a wildfire from spreading in Cestas-Perroton, southwest France; below left, Spain's military emergencies unit near Navas del Rey, 35 miles west of Madrid; below, a fire in Marcheprime, Gironde, where planes also dropped retardant, below right

UK set for fourth heatwave after 1% of average rainfall

Seren Hughes

Parts of England will swelter in the fourth heatwave of the year this week. Temperatures are expected to peak at up to 35C after record-breaking highs in May and June and another hot spell in mid-July.

This month's temperatures have been 3C above the average across the country, according to provisional Met Office data, and southern England has had only 1 per cent of the average rainfall for the month.

A total of 23 million homes are subject to a hosepipe ban and drought has been declared across parts of Wales.

The heatwave this month has set off 19 fires in England and Wales. Yesterday firefighters were continuing to battle a wildfire in the Cairngorms, which was in its 13th day.

The Met Office has said this week's heatwave, which will be most keenly felt in southeast England, will be "short-lived". Nevertheless, heat health alerts have been upgraded to amber in some parts of England and wildfire conditions are expected to remain elevated.

Temperatures are expected to rise from today for much of England, Wales and eastern Scotland. Temperatures of 30C could be experienced today, rising to up to 35C in southeast England tomorrow before dropping to a maximum of 29C on Thursday.

A heatwave is defined by the Met Office as a period of at least three consecutive days when daily maximum temperatures meet or exceed a threshold for a particular location.

During May, June and July temperatures of at least 35C were recorded for the first time in history, and this year is on course to break the final heat record from 1976 — 33 days where the maximum temperature exceeded 25C or more.

Gregory Wolverson, Met Office deputy chief forecaster, said: "This is a short-lived spell of heat, but temperatures will climb quickly through the first half of the week, particularly in the southeast.

"By [tomorrow] some areas could see temperatures in the mid-thirties, and while the heat will not be widespread across the whole of the UK, it will be enough for parts of the southeast to likely meet official heatwave criteria by Thursday."

The UK Health Security Agency has warned of increased health risks, particularly for vulnerable people.

Heat health alerts have been upgraded to amber for the East Midlands, East of England, southeast and London from today until Thursday. A yellow alert also covers Yorkshire and the Humber, the West Midlands and the southwest.

Not all parts of the country will be hot this week. Rain and cloudier conditions are forecast for parts of the northwest, with a chance of heavier showers and isolated thunderstorms.

The National Fire Chiefs Council said: "Fire and rescue services have already faced significant pressure this summer, responding to wildfire incidents during prolonged spells of warm and dry conditions. With the potential for further hot weather ahead, services remain prepared and ready to respond.

"While firefighters will always be there when they are needed, the vast majority of wildfires are preventable. That's why we're asking everyone to do their bit, take extra care and be aware of the increased risk.

"It only takes one spark to start a wildfire ... avoid using disposable barbecues in parks, the countryside and other open spaces, never discard cigarettes on the ground, and always take litter home."

Visitors to Normanby Hall Country Park near Scunthorpe have been warned to avoid sitting or parking under older trees with large branches because of heat stress.

Liam Dent, a parks and gardens officer for the park, told the BBC: "Due to a lack of water, the trees are basically going into survival mode. [They are] trying to protect the main trunk and [their] system. Any branches that are untoward or have cracks in them, they're just shedding them."

About four or five of the park's "veteran" trees, including a chestnut and an oak, have lost branches in recent weeks.

Full forecast, page 45

Three-day forecast

	Today	Tomorrow	Thursday
South	⛅ **29C** (16C)	☀ **35C** (17C)	⛅ **28C** (13C)
North	☁ **25C** (16C)	⛅ **25C** (16C)	⛅ **21C** (12C)

(min night-time temp in brackets) **Source:** Met Office

Analysis

One of the most dramatic phenomena born from the wildfires is the pyrocumulonimbus, or "fire thunderstorm" (Rhys Blakely writes).

At its simplest, a pyrocumulonimbus — often shortened to pyroCb — is a thunderstorm created by a wildfire. The intense heat released by a large blaze causes air, smoke and moisture to rise rapidly.

As the plume climbs into cooler, higher layers of the atmosphere, water vapour condenses to form a cloud. Under certain conditions, that cloud can continue growing until it becomes a fully fledged thunderstorm.

Only the most intense fires, burning beneath suitably unstable and moist air, produce pyrocumulonimbus clouds. When they do, they can cause dangerous fires to behave even more unpredictably.

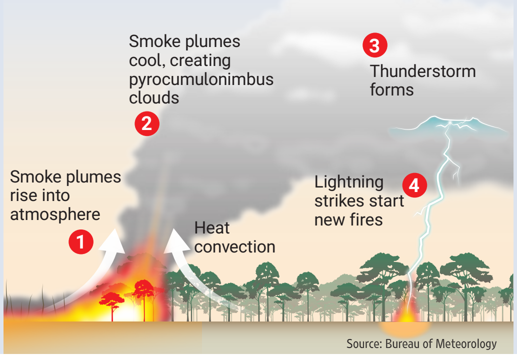
Lightning generated within the storm can ignite new "spot fires" far beyond the main blaze; strong downdrafts can generate sudden, erratic surface winds that rapidly spread flames and embers in new directions.

The fire-generated thunderstorm may also produce rain. However, with a pyroCb, the intense heat beneath the cloud may cause this precipitation to evaporate before it hits the ground, a phenomenon known as virga. Firefighters may experience all the hazards of lightning and chaotic wind gusts but get no drenching downpour.

One of the most terrifying events for fire crews is when part of the convective plume of a pyroCb suddenly cools or loses its upward momentum. Air, smoke and moisture in the cloud rapidly descend, crashing down in a "microburst". This can spread embers in all directions, instantly surrounding firefighters with new ignitions.

Conversely, in certain atmospheric conditions, the powerful updrafts feeding into the base of a pyroCb can begin to rotate, creating "pyrotornadoes" that can pull burning debris up into the sky.

How 'fire thunderstorms' form



① Smoke plumes rise into atmosphere
② Smoke plumes cool, creating pyrocumulonimbus clouds
③ Thunderstorm forms
④ Lightning strikes start new fires
Heat convection

Source: Bureau of Meteorology

Drug dealer uses child’s bedwetting to stay in UK

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

An Albanian drug dealer is at the heart of a legal row over claims that he should not be deported because his daughter suffered from nightmares and bedwetting.

Shpresim Koka was convicted in 2017 of dealing in criminal property and sentenced to 21 months in jail.

A deportation order was imposed after that conviction, which the Albanian, now 38, challenged before he was convicted in 2022 of possession of cocaine with the intention to supply and handed a three-year jail sentence.

That conviction classed Koka — who was also known by the first name, Fation — as a “medium” level offender under immigration law.

Two years later, Home Office officials ruled Koka should be deported after his release — and the Albanian appealed against that decision, arguing that sending him back to Albania would breach his statutory human rights.

Last year, a judge in the first tier of the immigration and asylum tribunal backed Koka’s claim to be allowed to remain in the UK on the grounds that deporting him would have been “unduly harsh” on his daughter, who was 11 at the time.

Shpresim Koka argued it would not be fair on his daughter if he was deported

The tribunal was told that the girl — who was described as having been at “a critical stage of her development” — “suffered nightmares and was bedwetting”.

But there was evidence that the girl’s condition had improved when her father returned home after being released from prison.

The original tribunal judge ruled that the effect of deporting the girl’s father would be “unduly harsh” on her because she “would be aware that her father was no longer in the UK and would be unable to be part of her life, other than by remote contact”.

The judge referred to evidence from social workers that remote contact would not be “sufficient” to meet the child’s needs.

That ruling was based on evidence from the child’s mother — who the judge described as credible, despite there being no supporting evidence from the girl’s teachers or GP.

Social workers said in a report to the tribunal that difficulties faced by the daughter and her sibling, then aged 14, would be exacerbated if their father was deported.

The tribunal came to that decision despite evidence from the Home Office that Koka no longer lived with the family and was “not in a romantic relationship with his children’s mother”.

But the judge noted that Koka maintained “a genuine and subsisting relationship with his two children” and that he was “closely involved” in their lives, visiting them “most weekends”.

Home Office officials appealed against the first-tier ruling allowing Koka to remain in the UK and an appeal tribunal judge has agreed that the earlier judgment contained “material errors of law”.

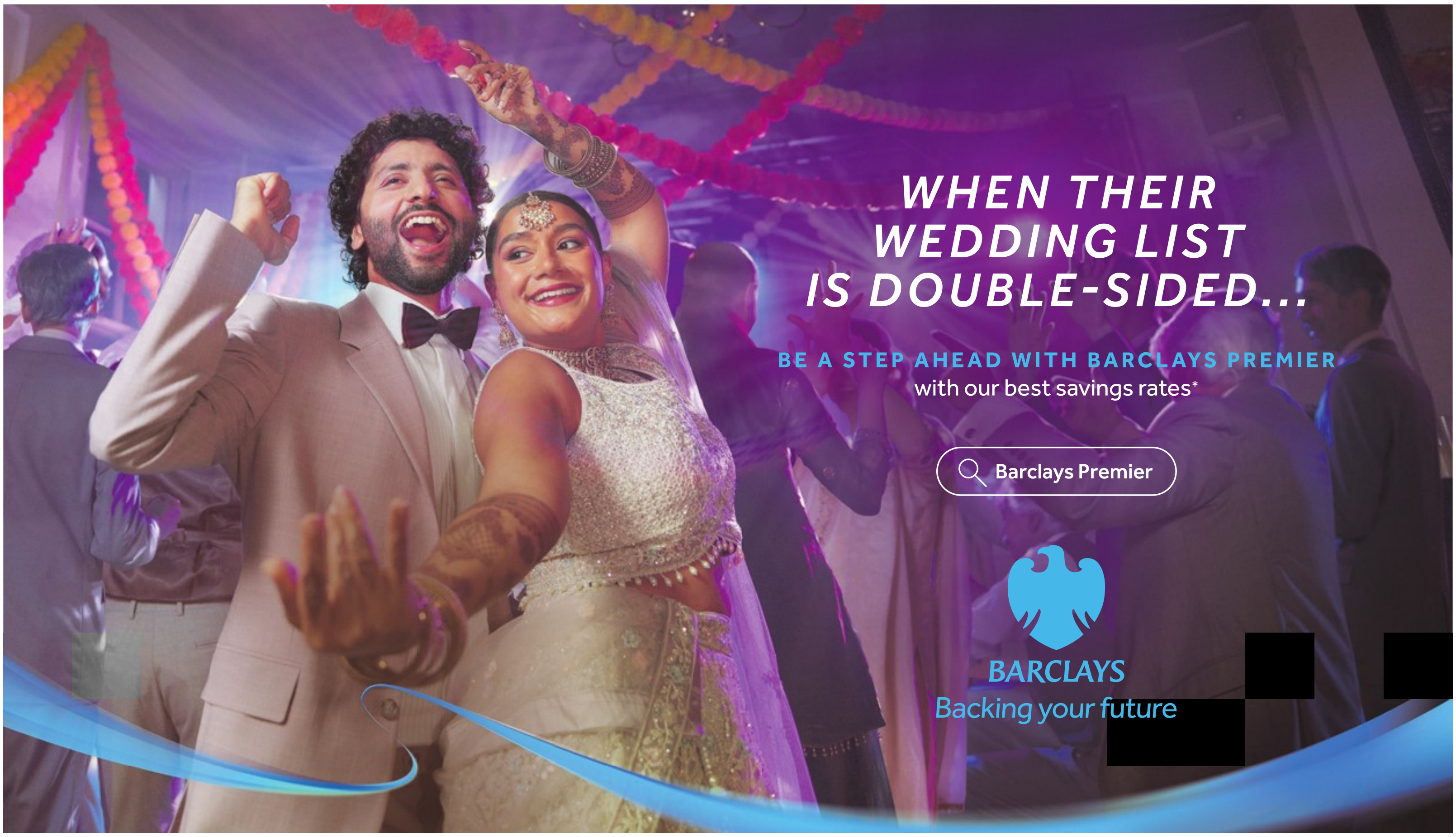
The appeal judge, Sarah Grey, added that the first ruling was “unsafe” and therefore “must be set aside”.

She ordered the case to be reheard with more “extensive evidence” by another first tribunal judge.

In coming to that decision, Grey noted that Koka’s two children “have now lived apart from their father for a number of years whereas at the time of his previous appeal he was still a part of the family unit”.

OLIVER DIXON

In the shades Chloe Hernandez admires the colours of the mixed borders at RHS Wisley in Surrey. The flowers include dahlias, geraniums and ligularias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Number of millionaires in UK falls to a 17-year low

Mehreen Khan Economics Editor

The number of millionaires in the UK has fallen to its lowest level since the financial crisis, new analysis shows.

The Adam Smith Institute (ASI), a centre-right think tank, found that the number of people with wealth of more than £1 million slumped to 442,000 in 2025 — down by 7 per cent year-on-year and the lowest since 2008.

Its "millionaire tracker", which uses data from the Office for National Statistics, measures the number of adults living in Britain with a net worth of at least £1 million. It includes assets such as property, pensions, cash, and investments. It ticked over the one million mark in 2020 before reaching 1.07 million in 2021. Since then there has been a sharp drop in each of the four years.

The ASI said the value of net assets has been hit by rising interest rates since the pandemic alongside a decline in banks' savings rates. The index uses "constant prices" which adjust for the impact of inflation and fluctuations in the exchange rate.

In its report, the think tank said: "There has [also] been a well-documented trend of high net-worth individuals either leaving Britain or no longer choosing to move here. Millionaires are leaving the country for a number of reasons, including the abolition of non-dom tax status, high levels of general taxation, and a hostile culture for wealth creators."

Despite reports of a big wealth exodus, HMRC data shows no clear evidence that non-doms are leaving the UK in droves. Its latest figures shows there were 60,700 residents who have their permanent home outside the UK in the tax year ending in April 2024. Non-dom status was formally scrapped in April 2025. It allowed some UK residents whose permanent homes were abroad to be exempted from UK tax on income they earn overseas. The status, which faced consistent calls to be reformed from politicians, has been replaced by new rules where foreign earnings are exempt for up to four years for new UK residents or those returning to the country after a decade.

The ONS measures the value of household assets every two years, meaning there are no official figures for the exact number of millionaires living in the country. The latest data shows there are 3.7 million households with net wealth above £1 million, most of which is down to rising house prices.

The ASI said Andy Burnham, the prime minister, should abolish inheritance tax and lower the rate of capital gains tax. HMRC data shows that 31,500 estates paid inheritance tax on death, about 4.5 per cent of people in the tax year ending April 2023.

The capital gains levy is applied on assets such as shares or other investments that rise in value. It is applied at the point of sale and levied at two rates: 18 per cent for basic rate taxpayers and 24 per cent for higher and additional payers.

Allies of the prime minister have called on him to equalise capital gains tax with income tax, which is applied at higher rates at bands of 20 per cent, 40 per cent, and 45 per cent.

Burnham has said he will "look in detail" at equalising rates, but has made no policy commitment. He has also previously suggested abolishing inheritance tax and replacing it with a "care levy" to fund social care reforms.

Andrew Griffith MP, the Conservatives' shadow minister for business and trade, said: "Whatever their personal finances, everyone should care about Britain having fewer millionaires to contribute to the tax pot and creating jobs and businesses here. It's a competitive world and when young and ambitious people are voting with their feet and leaving your country that's a shameful sign."

RICHARD E. AARON/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

Carly Simon, who is releasing a new album at the age of 83, issued a statement about her health problems after years out of the public eye

Carly Simon tells fans of Parkinson's diagnosis

Carly Simon has revealed that she has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease after years out of the public eye (Keiran Southern writes).

The singer-songwriter, 83, issued a lengthy statement in which she told fans she also underwent surgery for skin cancer on her face, which made her avoid being seen in public.

Simon, whose best-known songs include *You're So Vain* and *Nobody Does It Better*, said she was revealing her health problems because supporters had been asking about her lack of appearances.

"So many people have written to me, kindly wondering about my relative silence, asking how I am and what I have been doing," she said in a statement to People magazine. "The truth is, I've been learning how to live with Parkinson's disease."

Simon's last public performance was in 2018.

Parkinson's is a neurological condition that affects movement and speech. It is a progressive disease that can also cause depression and anxiety. There is no cure but medication can help manage symptoms.

Simon said: "Parkinson's is different for everyone, and it can be unpredictable. Some days I'm so tired I can't get the day moving at all. On others, it gives me a little more room to move, think, work and feel like myself."

Simon, a Grammy-award and Oscar winner, said her health problems began with arthritis in her knees and hip. She had three joints replaced and assumed her walking problems were "an unfortunate and rather ironic part" of the recovery.

"But my mobility continued to worsen," Simon said. "Overstuffed furniture became my enemy. Once seated, I could feel as though I had been swallowed by the chair and might remain there permanently, like a guest who had badly overstayed her welcome."

While coming to terms with her Parkinson's diagnosis, Simon was also treated for basal-cell carcinoma on her face.

"Between my mobility issues, the Parkinson's diagnosis, the surgery and the emotional effects of it all, withdrawing from public view was the most palatable reaction," Simon said.

She will release *Comes in Waves* next month, her first collection of new songs since 2008's *This Kind of Love*.

Holland: Some of my work is terrible

Jude Holden

Tom Holland has admitted some of his films are terrible and suggested audiences would be better off not watching them.

The Odyssey and *Spider-Man* star made the candid assessment while discussing the strain of promoting work he does not believe in.

Speaking on the *Dish* podcast, hosted by Nick Grimshaw and Angela Hartnett, Holland said publicity was straightforward when an actor felt genuinely proud of a film because recommendations to audiences were sincere.

But he said he had also faced interviews in which he was asked why cinema-goers should buy a ticket for a film he was promoting while privately thinking: "You shouldn't. Because it's shit."

The 30-year-old actor did not identify the films he regretted making.

His credits outside the *Spider-Man* franchise include the crime drama *Cherry*, the dystopian thriller *Chaos Walking* and *The Devil All the Time*, a southern gothic drama.

He has played Peter Parker in three previous standalone *Spider-Man* films, as well as several other Marvel productions, and returned for the fourth instalment, *Spider-Man: Brand New Day* this year.

Holland has most recently appeared as Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, in Christopher Nolan's adaptation of Homer's *The Odyssey*.

He said promoting the two new blockbusters had felt "like a bit of a victory lap", adding: "I'm super proud of both of the films."

The actor said that when performers admired the film they were promoting they did not need to mislead interviewers or audiences about its quality.

Holland has also appeared in *The Impossible*, *Uncharted* and the television drama *The Crowded Room*.

The comments emerged as Holland and his wife Zendaya were reportedly planning a large celebration in Britain after what has been described as a low-key wedding.

The Mail on Sunday claimed the couple had chosen Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire. Neither the couple nor Belvoir Castle have publicly confirmed the booking.

Tom Holland says he regrets some of his performances

Star of Industry makes leap to Black Panther role

Joshua Thurston

The British actor David Jonsson will take up the mantle of Black Panther in the next instalment of the film franchise directed by Ryan Coogler.

The 32-year-old joined Coogler on stage at Marvel Studios' Comic-Con International presentation in San Diego to announce the news. Jonsson will play the son of the late Chadwick Boseman's T'Challa in the third Black Panther film, due for release in 2028.

At Comic-Con International Jonsson and Coogler were joined by Letitia Wright and Winston Duke, who will reprise their roles of Shuri and M'Baku. "I want to say thank you so much," Jonsson told the audience. "Believe me, the honour is entirely mine."

Jonsson is known for his appearances in the BBC series *Industry*, and his roles in *Alien: Romulus* and last year's adaptation of Stephen King's thriller *The Long Walk*.

He began his career in the West End, winning a Black British Theatre Award for his performance in the 2021 play *and breathe…*. He also has roles in the forthcoming films *The Chaperones*, *Benn/Eubank* and *Scandalous*, co-directed by Colman Domingo.

Black Panther, released in 2018, won three Oscars.

David Jonsson will portray the son of T'Challa, the role played by the late Chadwick Boseman

Police make final push to find Suzy Lamplugh

Forty years after the estate agent vanished, help is sought before the case is shelved, writes **David Woode**

Forty years have passed since Suzy Lamplugh, an estate agent who was "fun and full of life", disappeared after meeting a client in west London.

The 25-year-old left her office in Fulham, west London, on July 28, 1986, for a 12.45pm appointment on Shorrolds Road, according to an entry in her work diary. She was never seen again.

Lamplugh was declared legally dead, presumed murdered, in 1993. Her body has not been found.

Now the Metropolitan Police are making one final push to provide Lamplugh's family with answers before the case is shelved next year.

Teresa Foster, the detective chief inspector who leads the Met's cold case homicide unit, said the inquiry "haunts" her team because "Suzy's never been found". The convicted killer John Cannan was "the prime suspect". He denied the accusation and died in prison in November 2024.

Foster said: "We're not going to stop looking for Suzy. If anyone has information we will take it, and safeguard and protect them in any way we can."

A smudged fingerprint on a rear-view mirror remained unidentified, police said. Foster hopes artificial intelligence and developments in forensic testing could help crack the case.

Detectives will spend the next year tracing 30 witnesses before the case is "mostly likely put into an inactive phase". Foster said new information would be followed up but her team "won't be working on it regularly as we are now". Lamplugh's family have been notified, she added.

Tamsin Tomlin and Lizzie Bingham, Lamplugh's younger sisters, said in an interview with The Times that they felt "lucky" to have had her for 25 years. They said their family had accepted the police's belief that Cannan was responsible and are "at peace".

Tomlin, 64, a florist and gardener, said the police had "given us comfort they are doing everything possible for us".

When asked what the ideal outcome would be, Bingham, 56, an operations business partner at United Learning, said: "The police have always been clear it was John Cannan and our family and parents accepted that. It would be good to know what happened to Suzy and where she is now — obviously that would be the ultimate answer. I suppose the ideal outcome is probably where we are now, in that we are at peace."

Operation Phoebus, the name of the Lamplugh case, is one of the Met's oldest open murder investigations. A missing person's report was filed later that day. Her white Ford Fiesta was found abandoned in Stevenage Road, Fulham, that evening with the doors unlocked and the handbrake off. Her purse containing £15 was in the driver's door pocket.

John Cannan, who died in jail in 2024, remains the "prime suspect"

The original inquiry failed to produce a breakthrough and was closed in 1987. Cannan, whose prison nickname was Kipper, came to detectives' attention in 1989. A former girlfriend suspected his involvement but the police were unable to link him at the time.

The case was reopened in May 2000. Cannan was serving three life sentences for the murder of Shirley Banks, 29, in Bristol in October 1987, the attempted kidnapping of a woman and the rape of two more women. He strongly resembled an e-fit of a "well-dressed man" who was seen talking to Lamplugh near the vacant property.

He was interviewed three times but denied involvement. In 2002 detectives declared him the "only suspect". Police passed a file of evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service but were told there was insufficient evidence to charge him. The Met apologised to Lamplugh's family for "significant opportunities ... missed during the original inquiry".

On the day Lamplugh disappeared, Cannan claimed he was in Birmingham "treating my mother to a spot of lunch". In 2018 police received information that led to a search and excavation of Cannan's mother's former home in Sutton Coldfield, but nothing was found. Land searches in Worcestershire and Somerset failed to yield answers.

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Suzy Lamplugh was 25 when she went missing. Far left, pictured with her brother, Richard, and sisters Tamsin and Lizzie

Seat tapings from Lamplugh's car were sent to the US in 2021 for testing but no DNA profile was found.

Tomlin and Bingham spoke to The Times on the eve of the 40th anniversary of their sister's disappearance. Family and friends had gathered at a garden party in the spring to remember the woman described as "kind, thoughtful, caring, fun and full of life". Sixty people attended the event in Surrey. Bingham and her older brother, Richard Lamplugh, 66, gave "lovely speeches". They watched home movies and viewed more than 120 photos.

The sisters paid tribute to their parents, Diana and Paul Lamplugh, who founded the Suzy Lamplugh Trust — the UK's first personal safety charity — praising their "outstanding" work in raising awareness of stalking and harassment.

Bingham, who was 16 when Lamplugh went missing, said: "When I reached 26 I was suddenly older than Suzy, having always been the youngest in the family. We've grown up, got married, had families and lost our parents — and we've done all of that without her."

Tomlin spoke on the day her own daughter turned 26: "She is now older than Suzy. We've brought our children up to know they have an aunt." She added: "We're lucky to have had Suzy for 25 years but you can't think it would be lovely to have her home. You never forget, never not include, but you move forward."

A stained glass window commemorating Lamplugh's memory was commissioned by their parents at All Saints Church in East Sheen, southwest London.

"Our parents were involved with the church for 50 years," Bingham said. "We didn't have a body and never held a funeral so it's a lovely place for the family to sit and reflect."

Tomlin and Bingham spoke of their pride at their older sister being synonymous with the protection of women's personal safety.

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, which turns 40 in December, led a campaign that resulted in stricter regulations for private-hire vehicle operators and drivers. It called for legislation change that led to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; has trained more than 1,000 employers to minimise physical and emotional harm to staff, and runs the National Stalking Helpline. Diana and Paul Lamplugh, who were both appointed OBE for their charity work, died in 2011 and 2018 respectively.

Tomlin said: "We're incredibly proud of what our parents achieved with the Trust. Suzy was always that person helping someone and she would love to know her life wasn't wasted."

Bingham added: "Our parents didn't want others to go through what they had experienced. It's a wonderful legacy that continues to grow despite neither of them being here."

If you rape someone, kill them too, navy murderer told police

A former Royal Navy petty officer jailed for life for the murder of two young men has been found guilty of sexually assaulting four people, including a 14-year-old boy, and had considered killing two of them.

Allan Grimson was sentenced in 2001 for the murders of Nicholas Wright and Sion Jenkins in the 1990s.

Grimson, 66, was tried at Winchester crown court for the rape and indecent assault of a teenage naval rating, and indecent assault charges against three other male complainants, between 1994 and 1999.

The double murderer told police that a sailor he had sexually assaulted was "lucky to be alive", and added: "If you're going to rape somebody, to get away with it, kill it."

Grimson, of Hollesley, Suffolk, was convicted yesterday on all 13 charges.

He was found guilty of indecent assault of the first victim in 1994, and of the second victim in 1998. Grimson was also found guilty of the rape and indecent assault of the third complainant, and of indecent assault and of taking an indecent photograph of the fourth complainant, the 14-year-old boy.

John Price KC, prosecuting, had told the court that when Grimson was interviewed about the case of Wright in 1999, he had "told police there were others who are lucky to be alive", whom he had failed to kill only because another person had been nearby.

Grimson told police that "he would probably have killed" the 14-year-old boy if he had been able to get away with doing so. The third complainant was a 17-year-old naval rating when he met the defendant, who was in his late thirties and working as an instructor at the Royal Navy Firefighting School in Horsea Island, Portsmouth. Price said: "That posting brought Mr Grimson into contact with many young males aged in their late teens, novices in the naval service subject to a regime of strict discipline and over every one of whom Allan Grimson exercised great authority by reason of his status in that service."

Nicholas Wright was murdered in the 1990s

Grimson had denied the charges.

Judge Paul Dugdale said he would require more information before Grimson could be sentenced on November 6.

TMS

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Through the security glass

Douglas Alexander, then transport minister, recalls having a family holiday on the Isle of Mull interrupted by a call from a senior civil servant. “He explained that he was sending a security official to discuss an issue he wasn’t able to discuss on an open phone line,” Alexander, right, tells the ITV documentary *Terror in the Skies.* The spook “came to the cottage where we were staying and locked my wife and family in the conservatory in order not to inadvertently breach the Official Secrets Act”. Briefed on an imminent bomb threat to transatlantic airlines, Alexander was whisked to London by a waiting RAF Lynx helicopter. He did not mention when — or if — the Alexander clan were ever released from their conservatory quarantine.

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LARRY’S DOMAIN
Andy Burnham’s premiership may have left Starmerites out in the cold but Larry the cat’s grip on Downing Street remains absolute. Burnham revealed his bichon frisé-poodle cross, Axel, will stay up north. Admitting his pet is an “angry little man”, the PM conceded that Axel “wouldn’t get on with Larry”. Peter Cardwell, author of *Political Animals*, quips: “Some call No 10 North an expensive gimmick but it’s good value if it keeps Larry and Axel apart.” Cardwell notes that Larry’s long list of vanquished rivals includes Dilyn, Nova, Poppy, Keir Starmer’s cats Jojo and Prince and Rachel Reeves’s kitten Pumpkin. Axel wisely declined a showdown.

……

The late Bill Oddie was baffled by the urban myths that followed him. He once told a diary elf about a persistent legend that he and “some naughty boys” at King Edward’s, Birmingham, rearranged traffic cones to divert Queen Elizabeth II’s cortège through the school grounds. Oddie heard it so often he almost believed it, but remained defiant: “I didn’t do that any more than me and the rest of the Goodies beat up John Peel in a nightclub,” he insisted. “Or hit John Craven over the head with a tripod in an argument over a cup of tea ... Where do they get these things?”

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BRUSH WITH THE CLUELESS
Standard gallery feedback forms used to be free in a box by the cloakroom. The National Gallery, however, has budgeted £250,000 for Sortition — a group seeking to replace the House of Lords with randomly chosen citizens — to convene a 50-person citizens’ assembly to review its purpose. Neither art expertise nor prior visits are required for selection. As one Tory source quipped: “Directors will have to pray a quarter of a million pounds yields something deeper than, ‘Who is Leonardo and why is he so expensive?’ ”

……

A tip on modern female empowerment from Kathy Lette, who took to Radio 4’s Loose Ends *to plug her new novel,* The Sisterhood Rules. *“Women should be each other’s human Wonderbras — supportive and making each other look bigger and better,” Lette advised. “I’m wearing a Wonderbra now and it’s so cool because when you take it off, you wonder where the hell your breasts went.” Uplifting news, in every sense.*

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ED HALFORD

Cuts put observatory in a world of trouble

Rhys Blakely Science Editor

The Jodrell Bank Observatory, which has been home to the UK’s largest telescope for nearly 70 years, faces closure after government funding was withdrawn from its most significant scientific project.

The site in Cheshire is dominated by the 76-metre Lovell radio telescope. Since 1957, it has been used to study distant stars and galaxies. During the Cold War, it tracked Soviet space missions.

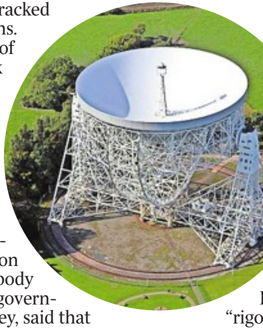
It is at the centre of e-Merlin, a network of seven radio telescopes across England that produce images with a sharpness comparable to those from the Hubble Space Telescope.

However, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the public body that distributes government research money, said that the £2.8 million annual funding for e-Merlin would end in March 2028.

Professor Simon Garrington, the observatory’s associate director, said this would “pull the rug out” from under Jodrell Bank’s scientific work. Without it, he said, the observatory would cease operating. He added technology developed for radio astronomy has produced wider benefits, including the invention of wifi and improvements in medical scanners. More recently, Jodrell Bank has developed new ways to track satellites and space debris, a capability destined to become more valuable.

Professor Brian Cox, the physicist and broadcaster, urged the government to intervene, arguing the cuts had been inherited from decisions made before Andy Burnham became prime minister and disbanded the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, which oversaw UKRI. “The damage to the UK’s science base has already been substantial,” he said.

UKRI said the Jodrell Bank decision came after a “rigorous prioritisation process” aimed at directing money towards areas that would deliver the greatest long-term scientific benefit and value. The agency said it would continue to support other work at the Jodrell Bank site, including its role as headquarters of the Square Kilometre Array Observatory, an international project building a new generation of radio telescopes.



The radio telescope at Jodrell Bank in Cheshire has been in use since 1957

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Cyclist who accused driver is fined for careless riding

Bill Curtis

A cyclist who sent footage of bad driving to the police has been fined £1,200 because the same video captured him "riding without due care and attention".

The man, from Leeds, uploaded a video showing a motorist passing close to him on West Yorkshire police's online reporting portal. However, later in the clip, he was seen approaching a parked car as another vehicle travelled towards him.

Rather than slow down or unclip from his pedals, the rider, who has not been named, chose to travel between the parked car and the vehicle heading directly towards him, according to police.

"This distance was significantly less than the car he reported earlier had given him. The driver was forced to hug the kerb to reduce the risk of contact," West Yorkshire police said on Facebook. It added that the footage had been captured in the village of Menston, near Ilkley, and that the rider had been dealt with by magistrates in Bradford last week.

The force said: "It is important that all road users are aware of the Highway Code, are considerate to other road users and understand their responsibility for the safety of others."

The £1,200 cost covered fines and court costs. Footage of the incident, released by police, has gone viral, gaining thousands of reactions.

Responding to reactions online, West Yorkshire police said: "As a reminder, let's not turn this into an anti-cyclist rhetoric.

"This cyclist was in the wrong on this occasion but there are plenty of cyclists on our roads who obey the highway code and ride responsibly."

ANDY GRAY

Home delivery Barn owlets wait for their parents to return with food on a farm in Lincolnshire. A bumper year for voles and mice should mean plenty to go round

£140 a night to camp at Carr's Scottish castle

Stuart MacDonald

Alan Carr plans to host luxury glamping trips in the grounds of Ayton Castle in Berwickshire, which he bought this year for more than £3.3 million.

For £140 to £160 a night, guests will be able to take "serene walks" through the estate's woodland, and stay in a tent that sleeps up to four people. Cold-water sessions and a sauna will be available.

The glamping experience will run from August 21 to September 11 and will be filmed for a Disney+ series about Carr's move to the castle.

Carr, 50, has said he is hoping to find love in the village of Ayton, which has a population of 600. He was inspired to buy the castle by his victorious appearance on *Celebrity Traitors*, filmed at Ardross Castle in the Highlands.

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Stunt pilot sues for £2m over 'dodgy nut'

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A 64-year-old amateur stunt pilot is suing for £2 million after blaming a "dodgy nut" for causing his biplane to nosedive into a runway.

Trevor Davis suffered multiple injuries, including a cracked skull, when he crashed 15 minutes after take-off at Popham airfield near Basingstoke in 2022. He has told a judge that a mechanical fault caused by a loose or missing nut meant that he was unable to steer the aircraft over the Hampshire countryside.

Davis, a veteran of aerobatics displays, has claimed up to £2 million in compensation for the effects of the accident from the Light Aircraft Association, which he said should not have authorised his plane as safe to fly.

However, lawyers for the association have denied that the nut could have been loose or missing during an inspection and they have told the judge that Davis was himself responsible for the accident owing to poor piloting.

In written submissions to the High Court in London, lawyers for the stunt pilot said that Davis was flying a Pitts Special biplane, an aerobatic aircraft first designed in the 1940s. After its introduction in the United States in the 1960s, the Pitts Special dominated stunt flying because of its excellent manoeuvrability, although it had a reputation for being difficult to land.

Trevor Davis says that after taking off from Popham airfield the joystick on his Pitts Special biplane stopped working

The aircraft involved in the accident was manufactured in 1966 and bought by Davis in 2011. Seven years later, he commissioned an engineer to "rebuild and modify" the Pitts Special in a three-year project.

The court heard evidence that the aircraft was inspected and ruled safe to fly by an association inspector before Davis took off.

However, Davis said that after 15 minutes in the air, he was unable to control the elevator with his joystick.

He has referred to expert evidence, which he has claimed demonstrated that the connection between the tail elevator and the pilot's joystick failed because of a missing or loose nut — and that the association inspector failed to "red flag" over the plane's airworthiness.

However, lawyers for the association told the court that there were no obvious shortcomings in the work conducted on the biplane and that the inspector "would have detected the absence of the nut/split pin had it been absent during the inspection".

The association added that Davis was partly to blame for the crash owing to his handling of the aircraft as he attempted to land.

Defending the claim, the association's lawyers said that Davis could have countered the nose dropping and prevented the crash by increasing throttle to "give a burst of engine power".

Christopher Loxton, a barrister for the association, argued that Davis "could also have chosen a far less challenging airfield to land at in the vicinity, for example, Thruxton".

Meanwhile, Davis told the court that he fought desperately to regain control by using the rudder and wing ailerons as he came in to land, but "despite his best efforts" the stunt plane hit the runway nose first before flipping over.

Davis struck his head on the cockpit rim, resulting in brain damage and a fractured skull, alongside smashed teeth and injuries to his neck, arm and shoulder.

Patrick Vincent KC, representing the pilot, told a preliminary hearing that Davis "continues to suffer from headaches and cognitive and behavioural problems as a result of the head injury.

It will return at a later date unless settled out of court.

My ‘woke’ take on Nolan’s admirable Odyssey
Melanie Phillips
Page 18

Comment

Burnham can learn from India’s ‘cockroaches’

Narendra Modi was humiliated by a youth uprising but our own Generation Z are rightly frustrated and deserve help

William Hague

Something very unusual happened over the weekend. In India the normally omnipotent government of Narendra Modi was humbled and forced to capitulate to pressure. Millions of young people making up the “cockroach” movement — so-called because they were originally dismissed as cockroaches by the authorities — pushed a ridiculed Modi into a humiliating climbdown. He was forced to sack his education minister and surrender to many other demands.

The protests originated in the leaking of exam papers that forced two million students to resit their exams. But they have illuminated the intensifying anger of Generation Z at arrogant and complacent ministers as their expectations are not met — 60 per cent of unemployed people in India are university graduates. They are part of a global trend, seen in youth-led protests in Nepal, Indonesia, Kenya and Serbia and the ousting of the prime minister of Bangladesh.

Such movements are most likely to take shape in countries with large, youthful populations and ineffective or corrupt ruling parties. They will be at their most dramatic if they ever manage to break through the repression of governments in Iran or China. Yet here in Britain and the rest of Europe, major issues are developing about unfairness between generations that political leaders would be wise to address.

Earlier this year I argued in an interview that late baby boomers such as me, born in the 1960s, have been the luckiest generation ever. We received free university education, chose among plentiful careers, bought houses that shot up in value and enrolled in defined benefit pensions (that we then closed to new entrants). Talk to recent graduates and you will find very different prospects. The number of entry-level jobs is plummeting. The proportion of twentysomethings living with their parents has been soaring — nearly half a million more among 25 to 29-year-olds on the latest estimates. Some of those are wrestling with student loan repayments that are changed on the whim of each passing government.

The BBC analysed my claim about the lucky generation in an interesting piece by Evan Davis. He came up with a redefinition: that it was a great generation in which to be lucky, since many born in the Sixties never went to university or got into such a pension scheme. That is a very fair point that I completely accept.

> A ‘youth triple lock’ could help with travel, savings and homes

Yet our good fortune as late baby boomers hasn’t just been financial. We have lived through a long period of peace and rising prosperity; no pandemic tore a hole in our formative years; no addictive screens took over our minds; we played freely in childhood before anxiety swept through society; and we were not fed the junk food and highly processed items that are now substituted for actual nutrition. Compared to today’s Gen Z, we are a lucky bunch.

We are also managing to load the costs of our decisions on to later generations. In Britain, the national debt is reaching the limits of what markets can tolerate. The triple lock on pensions, in its current form, will take the state pension up from 5 per cent to 9 per cent of GDP, to be financed by younger taxpayers. Globally, the immense costs of adapting to climate change and to geopolitical conflict will fall heavily on the next generation. And while they will benefit from the medical and scientific breakthroughs that AI will bring, they will also be in the front line of the mass disruption of jobs and careers that will come with it.

Of course, young people benefit from many things we did not have in the 1960s — foreign holidays, hugely expanded universities and the expectation of future, though very uneven, inherited wealth. But there is no doubting they face more challenges, higher costs and greater insecurity, often combined with less independence and poorer health.

This calls for something more than piecemeal changes, careless indifference or hoping for the best, as Modi can ruefully testify. Recent governments in Britain all have a mixed record on improving the prospects of young people. The last Conservative government chalked up a major success with its insistence on a knowledge-rich curriculum in English schools, with impressive results in reading and maths that are somehow still lost on ministers in Scotland and Wales. Labour ministers should take note. But the Tories slipped up badly in leaving a welfare system that is putting tens of thousands of young people on disability benefits without the need or incentive to find work.

ADNAN ABIDI/REUTERS

Narendra Modi was forced to climb down and sack his education minister

Labour has so far gone in the wrong direction with well-intentioned but counterproductive policies. Higher minimum wage rates and increased employers’ national insurance are hitting young people’s job prospects at the worst possible time. New rules on rental properties will reduce the supply of them. Andy Burnham will soon be saying more about new council houses but in the meantime the construction of new homes in London has fallen to the lowest since records began and lower than any major city in the developed world.

As the prime minister considers his ten-year plan and opposition parties reassess their policies, they should focus on fairness between generations and on helping young people prepare for the more turbulent world we will be passing on to them. There are signs of that. Reforms of the apprenticeship system are under way. The Labour MP Luke Charters has recently proposed a “youth triple lock” consisting of universal travel discounts for apprentices and school leavers as well as students, tax incentives for under-25s to save and a rent-to-own pathway for the over-25s. One of the best new policies announced by the Tory front bench is to redirect the first £5,000 of NI contributions paid by a young person into a nominated savings account.

A patchwork of good ideas, however, will not be enough. The parties could develop policies based on intergenerational fairness, from keeping the pensions system affordable to taxpayers to making it easier to build homes where young workers will need them. They could improve the resilience of a new generation by ending the catastrophe of so many being forgotten and left on benefits, now highlighted by the work of Alan Milburn. Above all, they could help to mobilise the brilliance of so many young people by creating a more dynamic economy, with more education on entrepreneurship and tax relief for those who start their own business. Governments have no way of predicting what skills will be needed in the age of AI, but they can help a new generation prepare. The ability to reinvent oneself, to fail and then succeed, to start a new venture, to have ideas not just a job, will be more important than ever.

Across the world, millions of young people are becoming angry and frustrated. They are often right. More political leaders will soon be caught out unless they understand that and act on it.

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My ‘woke’ take on Nolan’s admirable Odyssey

Conservative critics who see the film as an assault on western civilisation have missed its point

Melanie Phillips

@MELANIELATEST

It turns out that I represent the “woke” onslaught against western civilisation. Who knew? It was certainly something of a surprise.

I’ve been banging on for years about the assault mounted by fashionable left-wing ideologies against western culture and the urgent need to defend it. Nevertheless, I’d apparently committed the anti-civilisational crime of hugely enjoying and admiring Christopher Nolan’s film *The Odyssey*, based on Homer’s great epic about the protracted return home of Odysseus from the Trojan war.

The reaction to the film has been a seismic eruption. People have either raved about it or treated it as the desecration of a sacred text. Nolan has been accused of twisting the poem to make it relevant and “woke” for a modern audience, thus destroying a pillar of western culture.

Some scholars, while regretting certain notable omissions in the film, have nevertheless applauded Nolan’s faithfulness to the text in the film’s atmospheric strangeness, its episodic structure, its story about a storyteller telling a story and its subtle and moving portrait of the gods.

The classical historian Tom Holland said the film was “really true to the spirit of Homer”. Referring to the numerous literary and dramatic works that have drawn on the ancient Greek epic, which along with Homer’s *Iliad* has held supreme status in western culture for centuries, he said the film was “no more transgressive against Homer than what Virgil does, or Dante, or Tennyson, or Joyce, or indeed Dan Simmons or the makers of *The Homecoming*”.

Furious critics, however, claim Nolan has turned Odysseus from Homer’s heroic warrior into a product of therapy culture, riddled with guilt about his martial exploits. These critics frame the film entirely through the prism of left-wing politics. So they view criticisms of male power from some female characters as proof positive of a diabolical feminist plot by Nolan to downgrade the poem’s innate manly virtues.

> They barely understand the culture they so loudly claim to defend

But in Daniel Mendelsohn’s preface to his translation of Homer’s poem, he notes that since ancient times critics have remarked on the epic’s sympathy for female psychology and experience. Certain passages can even be read as attempts by Homer to subvert the male-oriented assumptions of his culture. For example, the nymph Calypso, who holds Odysseus captive for seven years, angrily denounces the gods for their double standard over male and female sexual behaviour.

Critics accuse Nolan of twisting the narrative to welcome invasion by “barbarians”, aka today’s mass incursion of immigrants into the West. This ignores the fact that in the film Odysseus participates in the indiscriminate and horrific violence in the sack of Troy and takes revenge on his wife’s unwanted suitors by slaughtering them all.

His guilt over what happened in Troy and subsequent introspection is a travesty of Homer’s fierce warrior, say the disparagers. But in the very first lines of the poem, Odysseus is described as having had “many pains in his heart” during his journey home. Mendelsohn describes Homer’s hero as “chameleon-like”, with so many “twists and turns” in his character that — unlike the film’s omniscient critics — readers of the epic feel they don’t know him at all.

It quickly became clear that the most passionate critics were conservatives from a growing group of very angry, mostly young men who believe the liberal intelligentsia is taking their culture away from them. Some of their rhetoric about the film promoting “the great replacement” of ethnic western identity is straight out of the playbook of America’s Maga sub-group led by the isolationist Tucker Carlson and the white supremacist Nick Fuentes.

These critics saw a black actor playing Helen of Troy, read that Nolan had used a feminist translation of Homer’s poem and leapt to the conclusion that this was yet another attempt to trash western culture and identity.

In fact, Nolan took certain key themes from Homer and expanded them in a creative and thoughtful way. In particular, he concentrated on a key theme of the poem, the ancient Greek notion of *xenia* or hospitality. This concept represented a code of behaviour towards both guests and strangers who must assume reciprocal obligations towards each other.

So Nolan’s Odysseus spends his journey home unable to face up to his breaching that code by abandoning the bodies of his dead soldiers whom he led into battle. He’s even depicted as breaching it by his role in the sack of Troy. This is because of his abuse of trust in misrepresenting his wooden horse as an offering to the gods, thus enabling the soldiers hidden inside to open the gates of the city to the waiting Greek army. For all this he must do penance. How can this ethical message of taking responsibility for your actions be “woke”?

At the end, the film is saying that violation of the norms of ethical behaviour will destroy civilisation. Is that not precisely what the Carlson tendency claim to believe? What this row has shown is that they have as superficial an understanding of the western civilisation they so loudly claim to defend as they do of Nolan’s film or Homer’s poem.

The film has got huge numbers reading Homer’s 12,109-line epic for the first time. In a supposedly post-literate culture fixated upon its iPhones, that’s a remarkable achievement. It appears Nolan may have done rather more for western civilisation than those hollering for his wokeish head.

Max Hastings Notebook

School was cruel but we got worst of life over with

The literary biographer Richard Graves (Housman, Powys, his uncle Robert) has just published *Imperial Dreams,* a memoir of his 1959-64 time at Charterhouse, where he was my form-mate. He describes in the book his enduring disgust that the response to the emotional travails of his brother Simon was to beat him, the school’s remedy for all evils.

In my own case masters and monitors periodically glanced at the calendar, snapped their fingers and exclaimed: “Gosh, we haven’t beaten Hastings for weeks!” The chastisers never lacked indictable evidence to justify making good the omission.

There is nonetheless much to be said for getting the worst bits of life over early, as did Dickens his time in the blacking factory. Those of us who were unsuccessful children often achieve a happier progression thereafter, as poor Simon Graves did not.

His brother’s memory is prodigious. He notes that Christopher Thorne, senior “beak” of the History VIth and later a distinguished writer on international relations, deplored my essays as over-written journalese. One of Graves’s own efforts was returned to him with a scrawled comment: “We don’t need another Hastings in the class!”

Judging from the modern grandchildren’s school reports that I read, no teacher dares to critique pupils with the savagery that for centuries was the norm. My scripture teacher once wrote: “Appears to have some intelligence, but does not think this subject worth the exercise of it”!

Poaching season

A blissful week fishing in Sutherland with the family’s young men, on a river that allows each party to keep one grilse — immature salmon — of six pounds or less, such as I cooked in the lodge. It beats me how anybody can abuse such a thing of beauty by grilling, which renders the flesh dry as our lawn. I took north bay leaves and suchlike for a court bouillon and threw in a few refinements — mint enriches everything.

The case is unanswerable for returning mature salmon to the rivers, but I am not surprised to hear that in starred restaurants gourmets pay £500 to share a little wild fish such as I loved, landed and poached.

Trumpian to a tee

The plane south from Inverness was weighed down with elderly, noisy American golfers, the women wafer-thin, their corpulent mates wearing baseball caps, one adorned with the Maga acronym. We might imagine that US travellers these days tiptoe abroad, embarrassed by the havoc their country is inflicting upon the world. Not a bit of it. We are told to take heart from polls showing that 60 per cent of Americans now acknowledge Donald Trump’s unfitness for office. It seems far more telling that 40 per cent still root for him including, I am pretty sure, my fellow passengers from Scotland. And we face a further 30 months of his catastrophic presidency.

Musical turn

Country house opera gets better and better. We saw a wonderful *Traviata* at Garsington with the historian Margaret MacMillan, her sister Ann and brother-in-law Peter Snow, one of the BBC’s greats. Peter is currently wheelchair-bound and I made myself useful by pushing him. As we weigh the same, and the Garsington grass is bumpy, by going home time I was panting more than somewhat. My wife, who is lightly constructed, said crisply in the car that I should forsake fantasies that she will be manning the handles when my own wheelchair moment comes.

Wrong writes

Every author knows the experience of being accosted by strangers who recognise one as having written books, but credit us with the wrong ones. I have been applauded for *Stalingrad*, *Berlin*, *Operation Mincemeat* and much else excepting *Middlemarch*.

It seems boorish to snub new acquaintances by urging that they save their kind words for Beevor or Macintyre. Instead I embrace the odd impersonation, hoping that Antony and Ben act up likewise for me.

THUNDERER

Healey’s ‘Buy British’ plan is a fast track to economic decline

Oliver Kamm

John Healey, the chancellor, said at the weekend: “I’m willing to load unnecessary costs on taxpayers, acquire on their behalf products and services that may not be the best available, constrain productivity gains, breach international commitments and make it harder for British companies to gain overseas contracts.”

OK, I admit he didn’t use those exact words. But my paraphrase is accurate. This is how Mr Healey genuinely summarised to The Sun his approach to public procurement: “Buying British not ‘if possible’, but by design. So every procurement pound supports British jobs, British apprenticeships and British skills.”

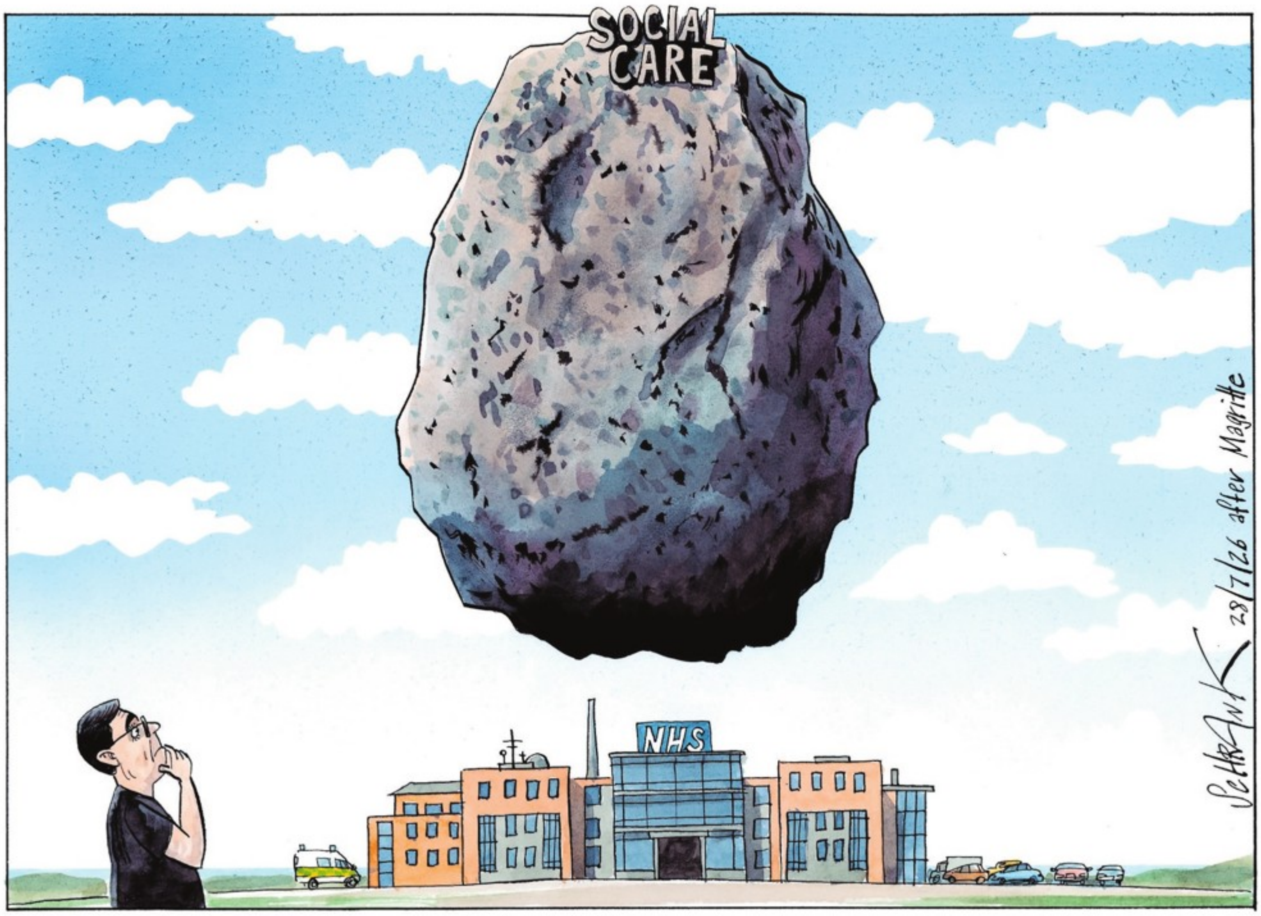
Public procurement is the process by which public-sector organisations buy or rent things, from lavatory paper to battle tanks. It accounts for roughly a third of all public spending, amounting to almost £400 billion in 2024/25. If Mr Healey’s pledge means anything, it must be that Labour will require the public sector to purchase domestic goods or services even if these are more expensive and of lower quality than alternatives. This is, to use a technical economic term, bonkers.

The first duty of public procurement is to get the taxpayer value for money. Mr Healey instead seeks to inveigle us into a project that he illegitimately paints as patriotism yet is better depicted as politically motivated favouritism towards sectional interests.

Britain is a party to agreements with the World Trade Organisation and the EU that prevent this sort of discrimination. If the government pursues this course then retaliation is inevitable. British companies will be locked out of bidding for overseas government contracts.

But the economic case is stronger still. Imports are neither a threat nor a sign of weakness. They are a benefit. They expand consumer choice and enable productivity gains in domestic production through the mechanism of specialisation. An official policy of “Buy British” in public procurement would knowingly curtail these benign effects.

Sometimes economic arguments aren’t paramount. We can’t, for example, throw open our defence industry to Chinese or Russian bidders as national security is at issue and these are aggressive and autocratic states. But Mr Healey’s commitment goes far beyond this truism. Above all, it’s flatly untrue that “every procurement pound supports British jobs”. His policy would merely reshuffle British jobs from high-productivity sectors, competitive in international markets, to those dependent on government largesse. This is a fast track to economic decline. Mr Healey should swiftly reverse course.



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Public are finally tiring of the No 10 Show

No great drama can continue indefinitely and in our politics-as-entertainment culture, we may be reaching series fatigue

James Marriott

@J_AMESMARRIOTT

A strange air of anticlimax hangs over British politics this summer. A new prime minister has arrived not, as new prime ministers once did, amid excitement and overheated predictions of a new era but amid shrugs and scepticism. Even Andy Burnham himself (not a man given to underrating his own political significance) says he is "acutely conscious" that the seventh prime minister in a decade has limited claims on public fervour.

Meanwhile, Nigel Farage's attempted showdown with the establishment has proven a squib; he finds himself fighting a lonely by-election against a man dressed as a bin to general public apathy. And for all the predictions of a "febrile" summer, disorder and looting have not burnt through the capital. Some have even begun to wonder (I think prematurely) about the return of two-party politics.

The working assumption of most political commentary — it is certainly the way I tend to think — is that public fury and polarisation will continue to ratchet ever upwards. Every prime minister from Johnson to Starmer has become an object of extraordinary loathing. But the future is not written. Surveying the present mood of summertime listlessness, an optimistic (or semi-optimistic) thought occurs: might it be possible for the public to weary of its rage? Could the passions that drive our feverish politics, unnerving flighty MPs and throwing up new radical parties, one day lapse into something more like indifference? Might we go five years without changing prime minister or trooping to the polls?

Ten exhausting years after Brexit and the beginning of Trump's first term, events that would once have seemed "unprecedented" risk seeming merely banal. Even political obsessives I know are beginning to find the relentless carousel of political drama tedious. One new prime minister is thrilling; seven becomes a routine. Likewise, the ceaseless grind of polling bounces, polling collapses, parliamentary scandals and make-or-break by-elections. A world-weary electorate has seen it all before. It may be that the public lust for drama will be sated and fade into apathy.

Might we go five years without changing prime minister?

Politics, it is frequently remarked, has become a branch of the entertainment industry. It is less often remembered that no Netflix svengali has ever worked out how to keep viewers hooked on a single show for ever. A television series may start out with stunning ratings but you would be naive to imagine it will hang on to its audience indefinitely. Even *Breaking Bad* came to an end. And in TV, fantastical new plot twists are a sign not of success but of desperation, as producers attempt to win back wearied viewers. Perhaps politics can "jump the shark" (via comedy by-elections and biennial prime ministers) in the same way that a fading series can. Politics is crazier than ever but indifference to it is growing quickly: according to a recent Reuters report "news avoidance" has never been higher. Similarly, the number of people posting on social media is dropping steeply, perhaps implying that less public rage is being pumped into the system.

Also overlooked is the fact that although social media has accelerated politics, it also dethroned it. In traditional media such as newspapers and radio, political news is automatically accorded first importance: front pages, top-of-the hour bulletins. On social media politics must fight for precedence. For some, political news is more ubiquitous than ever before. Many others can ignore it entirely. Politics seems to be winning the battle for our attention for now. But can it keep winning it for ever? There are a zillion other options competing for our eyeballs in an ever more ruthless attention economy: sports betting, video games, football, pornography, influencer bilge. If political drama ceases to amuse, a jaded public can easily move on and seek its thrills elsewhere.

A zillion options other than politics compete for our eyeballs

If it seems improbable that the dangerous political energies of our time could be channelled into, say, football, it is worth remembering that political fanaticism often runs less deep than you might assume. People are always moderating their views or drifting away from politics without even realising that is what they are doing. It happens individually — the hundreds of student Marxists who become corporate lawyers every year — and it happens to populations too. Several times in Britain's history we have seemed to be racing into a doom spiral only to relax into equanimity once again. In the 17th century (if you will forgive a glib generalisation) Britain was racked by political and religious discord; the 18th century was an age of relative moderation.

To the case against unending chaos you might add more minor examples from recent politics: Italy and Australia were once notorious for churning through prime ministers. Both countries have managed to stick with just one leader for several years. We are all prone to interpret passing trends as historical laws. But life is often more indeterminate than that. On the most superficial level culture is shaped not by unidirectional "trends" but by see-saw cycles of generational backlashes. The political pessimism of my generation is partly a response to the End-of-History blitheness of the grown-ups above us and their so-called "boomer optimism". It may be that our children will find the earnest political rage of their millennial parents cringeworthy and opt for a pose of affectless disengagement instead.

There are, obviously, many objections to the case for a calmer politics. Growing political partisanship is a trend dating back at least to the 1970s. Polls show voter dissatisfaction, mistrust and anger at record levels. If asked I would bet against the optimistic argument I have laid out here. But in these warm, rather apathetic days it is at least a scenario worth bearing in mind.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to
letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to
1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Net-zero transition

Sir, Your editorial ("Flying Blind", Jul 27) raises an important point: governments should be honest about the costs and trade-offs involved in responding to climate change. But the debate should not be confined to the costs of reaching net zero. The recent heatwave has been estimated to have cost the UK economy about £1 billion. Those are not hypothetical future costs but losses being incurred today, despite progress on decarbonisation.

The UK should continue to pursue rapid emissions reduction, but no credible strategy for managing climate risk can rely on mitigation alone. Even if Britain reached net zero tomorrow, the warming already locked into the climate means that adaptation is now unavoidable.

The choice is not between mitigation and adaptation. We need both: ambitious decarbonisation to limit future warming, and equally ambitious investment in resilient homes, infrastructure, water supplies and public health to reduce the mounting costs of the warming already upon us. If ministers are to be candid about the costs of net zero, they should be equally candid about the far greater costs of failing to prepare for the climate impacts that are already here.

Professor Emma Howard Boyd
Chair, National Heat Risk Commission

Sir, UK climate change policy has been marked by an unworthy refusal to acknowledge its costs. Your extremely welcome editorial hopefully consolidates the change in public debate about this that has recently taken place. A point must, however, be added. Reducing UK emissions will have only a negligible effect on global emissions. The newly industrialising countries, including China and India, have no intention of sacrificing their economic progress for emissions reduction. These countries account for most of the huge growth in global emissions that has taken place, and will account for the majority of its continued increase. They enjoy a legally binding permission to do this under climate change treaty law.

In this circumstance, appreciation of the costs of the UK's policy generates a very simple cost-benefit function. There will be no benefits at all, and it is completely irrational to incur the costs you identify.

David Campbell
Professor of law, Lancaster University

Corrections and clarifications

● We wrongly said Louise Haigh was the youngest woman to have been made a cabinet minister (Comment, Jul 27). Ruth Kelly was four months younger when she became education secretary in 2004.

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Urgent need to improve our prison system

Sir, I agree with Libby Purves that our prisons need fixing and I think I know how that can be done ("Fixing our prisons should be top priority", Jul 27). When I was chairman of Action For Prisoners' Families I visited about 20 prisons and, for the most part, the inmates were divided into three quite distinct categories. About one third were dangerous people, mostly men, who need to be kept in prison for a long time because they were a danger to the public. Another third were there for drink or drug-related offences: they need to be rehabilitated, otherwise they will return again and again after committing some relatively minor crime so as to buy drink or drugs. This would take time but could be done. The remaining third were people who found it difficult to cope with everyday life, who will continue to commit minor crimes and do not need to be in prisons with bars and tight security. They could easily and safely be accommodated in simpler and cheaper units with a lock and key and some medical supervision. If this third were accommodated thus, it would free up about 30,000 places in our existing prisons.

I believe there are some unused army barracks that could be adapted to house these prisoners while we wait for relatively low-cost extensions to be built on to existing prisons.

David Astor
Milton under Wychwood, Oxon

Sir, If the prime minister wants to end rough sleeping, then what happens to prisoners really matters. Too many end up homeless on release and it's not simply because there isn't anywhere to house them: the right information is not passed on to housing providers, and people are not able to get the benefits they need to cover their housing bills. And even when they do get a roof over their head, too often they do not get the support they need to stay off drugs or access mental health treatment. Without that support, they can end up breaking their tenancy agreements, becoming homeless or returning to prison. There are solutions, but it will require a government that is firmly focused on the connection between what happens in prison and the challenges people face on release, including access to housing, healthcare, and substance misuse treatment.

Enver Solomon
Chief executive, Nacro

Sir, In September 2024, five of the most senior former judges in England and Wales called on the government to reverse the trend of imposing ever-longer prison sentences. While Alex Norris might be advised in your leading article ("Jail Break", Jul 24) to "urgently revisit the detail of this policy", he should also remember this intervention.

The "inertia" in the prisons system is caused by the lack of willingness of successive governments to address its multiple problems. This is because it is not a vote winner. Investing vast amounts in building more prisons might be popular but it is not a solution. The average number of convictions of a prisoner in England and Wales is 19, which shows the "revolving door" effect that the present system creates. The only way to change this is for the main political parties to work together, using Norway as their template. Recidivism there was reduced from 70 per cent in the 1990s to its present rate of 20 per cent. The country achieved this by focusing on rehabilitation.

Fiona Sample
CEO, the Oswin Project;
Employment Advisory Board chair,
HMP Northumberland

How to encourage voters to turn out

Sir, Concerning the possibility of mandatory voting ("Compulsory voting in the mix — with £10 fines for the apathetic", news, Jul 27), I would like to offer two suggestions to encourage greater turnouts. First, rather than, or in addition to, adopting the stick of fines for all non-voters, we should offer a carrot: all who actually vote could be automatically entered into an election draw for a tempting substantial prize. Second, offering the option to vote online (with suitable safeguards in place) would have the potential to increase turnout, encourage younger people's engagement in politics, assist the counting process and — unlike postal voting — would allow voters to follow campaigns through to the day of the election itself.

Peter Saunders
Salisbury

Sir, Compulsory voting sounds more like autocracy than democracy to me.

Barry Baines
Weymouth, Dorset

Protecting rivers

Sir, Your leading article "Dirty Business" (Jul 25) rightly calls for tougher penalties for those who continue to pollute our rivers. Here in Carmarthenshire, the River Towy is not just an environmental asset but the heart of a centuries-old cultural tradition, where at one time US presidents would come to fish for salmon and sewin (sea trout). The coracle fishery, recognised as part of Wales's living heritage, depends on a healthy river. Repeated pollution incidents, poor water quality and declining fish stocks now threaten not only wildlife but the survival of a tradition passed down through generations. If action continues to be delayed by National Resources Wales, Welsh Water and the Senedd, we risk losing an irreplaceable part of our history as well as our river.

Protecting our waterways is about more than the environment: it is about safeguarding communities, livelihoods and traditions before they disappear for ever.

Julie Rees
Secretary, Carmarthen Coracle & Netsmen's Association

Never a cross word

Sir, Nicholas Pennington (letter, Jul 27) insists that a crossword must be solved purely from "one's own knowledge" without reference to external sources. But unless he was born with an innate understanding of 17th-century poets and obscure botanical terms, all human knowledge was acquired from dictionaries, encyclopaedias, or experience at some point in time.

Martin Wainscott
Bagshot, Surrey

Sir, When my husband and I complete any crossword in The Times he places a large tick next to it. If we have had to resort to outside information he then crosses the stem once for each case. On a bad day there may be two crosses. It doesn't count if you are merely checking an answer, provided it has already been filled in on the grid.

Rae Robbins
Woking, Surrey

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime phone number.

$40,000,000 'RUM RING' IS SMASHED

FROM THE TIMES JULY 28, 1926

The discussions between American and British officials on the prevention of liquor smuggling into the United States came to a satisfactory conclusion yesterday, when a final meeting was held at the Foreign Office in the morning.

The new proposals do not in any way impair the "Convention respecting the Regulation of the Liquor Traffic" which was signed by the United States and British Governments in Washington in January 1924. They merely elucidate it in the light of two years' experience of its working. The negotiators have reached an understanding in regard to the kind of help which the British authorities can give in the prevention of smuggling from the sea and especially from the favourite bases of the smugglers in the West Indies. Their proposals are now being considered by the two Governments.

It is obviously impossible to give details as to the proposed improvements in procedure, since their disclosure would be of benefit only to the smugglers. But it may be said that they include better methods of observation within the territorial waters of the West Indian islands, and a closer supervision of ships' clearance papers.

● Mr William V Dwyer, a wealthy sportsman and race-track owner, who was alleged by the Government to be the head of a liquor smuggling syndicate with a turnover of $40,000,000 (£8,000,000) in two years, was found guilty in the Federal Court in New York yesterday, together with Mr EC Cohron, his so-called "pay-off man", of conspiracy to violate the national Prohibition Law. Judge Mack sentenced Dwyer to two years' imprisonment and ordered him to pay a fine of $10,000 — the maximum penalties for the offence. He gave Cohron a like sentence of imprisonment and fined him $5,000. Six co-defendants were acquitted, among them a former captain of the coastguards.

The so-called "rum ring" proposition has attracted a great deal of attention because of the Government's attempt to prove that Dwyer and his fellow-defendants conducted operations on the scale of a large business corporation, with the protection of the Federal and New York City police.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Restoration rules

Sir, Emma Duncan says "the planning system, along with the listed buildings system, has done a good job of protecting lovely places ("Here's a plan: relax home improvement rules", Jul 24). May I steer her to the Victorian and 20th Century Society's "at risk" lists? The Southbank Centre was so badly preserved that when, at long last, it was listed, it only got grade II protection. Arguably the most beautiful 50-metre pool in England, Coventry Central Baths, is being demolished by the city council just when the demand for places to swim has catapulted. A caseworker for C20 comments: "Its backlog of repairs need addressing rather than demolition." I disagree with Emma Duncan on the change of laws needed. It will continue to be too easy, cost-effective and environmentally disastrous to bulldoze old buildings when VAT is charged on refurbishments and not on new-builds.

Joyce Glasser
London NW3

Singular sweater

Sir, I much enjoyed Mike Atherton's article on Jim Laker ("Curious tale of legend's lost jumper", Jul 25) and was privileged as a ten-year-old boy to watch the great man's memorable achievement on our black-and-white television. I also remember Laker as a superb cricket commentator who grasped what many present-day commentators seem to forget, that viewers can see for themselves what's happening. He would often remain silent for several minutes as the on-field action unfolded, speaking only when necessary. Contrast this with the "motor-mouth" delivery of some sports commentators today, especially during the Fifa World Cup: some barely stopped for breath in their clamour to describe the obvious.

Chris Hunt
Neale, Co Mayo

Motorway madness

Sir, I agree with Robin Lamport's letter (Jul 23) about Operation Brock on the M20. My husband and I returned from France a few days ago and on leaving the Channel Tunnel were greeted with a narrow two-lane motorway. The hard shoulder was for lorries and the other thin lane for cars, all sandwiched in by concrete blocks. Had there been an accident the whole road would have been blocked and no access possible for ambulances or fire engines. Meanwhile, traffic in the other direction was flowing freely while our lane crawled along for no apparent reason. Summer madness.

Pam Gillham
Sevenoaks, Kent

Capping capers

Sir, You report that "capping", whereby boys acknowledge a schoolmaster when passing them outdoors, has died out at Eton ("George's Eton days a lesson in change", Jul 25). This tradition was not only at Eton. As a boy of 12 attending the local grammar school in Holywell in the late 1950s, I would walk into town on a Saturday with my father, who had attended the same school years earlier. We would often bump into Mr Thomas, the retired deputy headmaster. My father and I would raise our knuckles to our forehead, and he would raise his trilby and reply: "Morning, boys."

A gentle, reassuring tradition.

Edward Jackson
Ewloe, Flintshire

Daily Universal Register

UK: Unilever and GSK results; road fuel prices published; day six of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, including the 100m finals.

Nature notes

Wild carrot, a biennial umbellifer that looks superficially like hogweed and cow parsley, does well in dry spells due to clever adaptations for drought conditions. The swollen tap root, laid down in the first year, stores starches, sugars and carbohydrates that, in drought conditions, become more concentrated, lowering its osmotic potential and acting as a sponge, drawing moisture in from the surrounding soil. At the same time, foliage growth stops, and energy is put instead into the development of fine, lateral rootlets to maximise absorption. The plant's lacy leaves reduce the surface area available to the sun, helping it to resist drying out, while the flower heads can contract to form a ball, preventing the developing seeds from drying out. MELISSA HARRISON

Birthdays today

Harry Kane, *pictured*, footballer, Bayern Munich, Tottenham Hotspur (2009-23) and captain of the England national team, 33; **Val Bourne**, gardening writer, *Tough Plants* (2025), 76; **Santiago Calatrava**, architect and structural engineer, World Trade Center Transportation Hub, New York City (2016), 75; **Michael Carrick**, footballer, England (2001-15) and Manchester United (2006-18), head coach, Manchester United, 45; **Bernard Cohen**, abstract artist, 93; **General Sir Peter Cosgrove MC**, governor-general of Australia (2014-19), 79; **Beverley Craven**, singer-songwriter, *Promise Me* (1991), 63; **Harriet Dart**, tennis player, UK No 5, 30; **Jim Davis**, cartoonist, creator of Garfield, 81; **Prof Sir Anthony Finkelstein**, president of City, University of London, 67; **Ben Hawes**, three-time field hockey Olympian, 46; **Baroness (Sue) Hayman of Ullock**, minister at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 64; **Richard Heffer**, actor, *Colditz* (1972-74), 80; **Kelly Hoppen**, interior designer and writer, a Dragon on *Dragons' Den* (2013-15), 67; **Fern Horine**, UK ambassador to Moldova, 57; **Leo Houlding**, climber, the first Briton to free-climb El Capitan in the Yosemite Valley, US, 46; **Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Johns**, chief of Air Staff (1997-2000), 87; **Anna Lapwood**, organist, conductor and broadcaster, 31; **Riccardo Muti**, conductor, 85; **Jim Pettigrew**, chairman, Allied Irish Banks Group (financial services), 68; **Dame Barbara Stocking**, president of Murray Edwards College, Cambridge (2013-21), 75; **Robert Swan**, polar explorer, the first man to walk to both the North and South Poles, 70; **Maha Vajiralongkorn**, King of Thailand, 74; **Sir Colman Treacy**, lord justice of appeal (2012-18), 77; **Hannah Waddingham**, actress, *Ted Lasso* (2020-26), 52; **John David Washington**, actor, *Tenet* (2020), 42; **Rosie Wrighting**, Labour MP for Kettering, 29.

On this day

In **1858** fingerprints were used for the first time to identify a party to a contract, in Jangipur, West Bengal, India.

The last word

"Economy is the art of making the most of life. The love of economy is the root of all virtue." George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright, *Man and Superman* (1903)

Expanding War

The bloody conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East are converging and becoming even more dangerous. Strong defences have never been so vital

President Zelensky is on the road again. This week the Ukrainian leader is in Britain to persuade Andy Burnham to agree to a long-term drone research and production pact, and shortly afterwards in Washington to bring Donald Trump around to the idea that he should be tougher with Vladimir Putin. His most persuasive argument in both these sensible causes is that the defence of Kyiv and the defence of free passage in the Strait of Hormuz are fronts on the same extended battlefield against the world's autocrats.

Like it or not, says Mr Zelensky, there is a strategic overlap between the two fierce wars. It is no coincidence, after all, that the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, is also in the United States this week. In his travel bag, Mr Zelensky brings information that he hopes will convince the US president that the dots should be joined.

First, by striking an Iranian arms shipment in the Caspian Sea destined for Russia, the Ukrainians have demonstrated that Moscow and Tehran are in cahoots, and that Kyiv can dismember a supply chain that has become crucial to current wars. Second, Ukraine wants to present evidence that Russia has been mapping US airbases in the Middle East — including Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait — and then passing on the information to Tehran. The two countries, in other words, are integrating target acquisition, a very sophisticated level of military collaboration. Russia is trading satellite intelligence, guidance algorithms and electronic warfare systems in return for Iranian drones and weaponry.

Mr Zelensky's message has to be taken seriously. Russia and Iran have become more than allies: they are jointly collaborating in military technology. Russia uses adapted Shahed 136 drones from Iran against Ukrainian cities and backs up these deadly swarms with anti-jamming navigation and decoys. These systems, having been road-tested against Ukraine, are then fed back into the Middle East conflict when Iran attacks the Gulf states for their supposed alignment with the US.

The US president may suspect that Mr Zelensky is simply striving to make himself continually relevant to Washington. He may even believe that the Ukrainian leader, struggling to stay in control of his country's war management and its war economy, is trying to pull the wool over his eyes. But Mr Zelensky's fears are real enough. Mr Trump's eagerness to delegate the Ukraine war to his European allies, in order to focus on Hormuz, may shred his previous promises to Kyiv. AtNato's recent Ankara summit, the US promised American licences for Ukraine to manufacture Patriot missile components locally. Ukrainian cities desperately need air defence; Mr Zelensky makes the case that the battle over Ukrainian skies is redesigning the war in the Middle East. It is therefore a Trump promise worth keeping.

Mr Zelensky's demands of Mr Burnham are more modest. They include contributions to air defence systems, electronic warfare jamming kit — or at least the intellectual property rights to this tech so that Kyiv can build its own — and countermining training programmes in the Black Sea. These are not unreasonable requests. The prime minister should not need the kind of persuasion being applied to a sceptical US administration. But Mr Zelensky is surely in his rights to ask whether Mr Burnham, his new friend in Downing Street, intends to commit to serious defence-spending targets to end the slaughter of Ukrainian civilians.

The British too would be happy to hear the answer. So far, there has been only vagueness from Mr Burnham and his new government, at a time of dangerously entangled wars, as to whether the government will meet its Nato promise to spend 3 per cent of GDP by 2030, let alone approach 3.5 per cent by 2035. Leadership, in war as in peace, demands that clarity.

Crisis of Care

Andy Burnham is wrong that the state must fully subsidise social care for all

It has been 15 years since Sir Andrew Dilnot published his report on fixing social care — a crisis that no one disputed existed then and one that has only worsened since with an ageing society. At present only those with assets less than £23,250 qualify for free care. Everyone else in England must fund their care themselves. Sir Andrew's report, which recommended a cap of £35,000 for what individuals should contribute to their care, was warmly received. It was then cast into the black hole where all of the UK's difficult policy problems go. Every successive government has pledged to grasp this nettle before ultimately deciding not to, deeming it overly expensive or explosive to touch.

Andy Burnham is the latest occupant of Downing Street to say something must be done. The prime minister has warned that the NHS will collapse unless social care is reformed and has pledged he will not leave office without having done something. What that something is remains unclear: Mr Burnham has, so far, declined to offer any specifics about what his reformed system would look like beyond a broad description of "major" change. Baroness Casey of Blackstock, the perennial Whitehall fixer, is formulating a new plan for social care. She may be asked to come up with answers sooner than expected.

Mr Burnham has mooted that he would like a national social care system to "operate on the NHS principle", so to be free at the point of use. This would come in at an astronomical cost of £18.5 billion a year. As this newspaper has reported, this universal offer would still not include daily living costs such as energy bills and accommodation — echoing countries such as France and Denmark. In others, such as Germany and Japan, individuals pay their full accommodation costs while the care costs are split with the state.

There is a broader question of what exact problem Mr Burnham is trying to solve: is it to ease pressure on the NHS? Is it to improve the quality of care? More availability? Or more fairness? Until Mr Burnham explains, it is difficult to say whether the plan is the right one. The principle of a universalist solution, however, is misguided. It would be too great a burden on the state, while stifling private sector provision of care. Sir Andrew was on the money when he suggested there needs to be a cap on individual costs, but also a means-tested contributory principle. It should not be right that all individuals must sell their homes to pay for care; nor should it be right that the state fails to take wealth into account.

Needless to say, there has been no explanation from the Burnham government yet about how this potential national care service would be paid for. Given that the prime minister has insisted he will stick to the fiscal framework outlined in the party's last election manifesto, funding it through more borrowing is out of the question. So too is raising more funds through VAT, national insurance or income tax rises.

During his last stint in government, Mr Burnham — then the health secretary — proposed an inheritance levy to pay for a social care service that was rapidly dubbed a "death tax" by the Conservatives. He may be about to revisit this idea, but he should not underestimate the strength of feeling against it. At a time when state spending is rising, almost without restraint, tackling this would be a better solution to providing the funds. Mr Burnham needs to think beyond headlines.

Watching the Watchmen

Birdwatchers will need to keep one eye on their new code of conduct

Asked to conjure up the prototypical twitcher, a familiar stereotype probably springs to mind: patient, nature-loving, silently inquisitive. But should you spot a birdwatcher in the wild, and catalogue their behaviour, you may quickly form a very different impression.

In seeking their quarry, these mild-mannered hobbyists can develop a scarily competitive edge. Pursuing a rare bird — known in the community as a "mega" — whole flocks of birdwatchers will migrate across the country in unison, their long-lens cameras, binoculars and gear in tow. Once they have homed in on their prey, they are not averse to swooping in, Hitchcock-style, with their cars and equipment planted on nearby lawns, driveways, private property and farmland.

Welcome though enthusiasm for the natural world undoubtedly is, these excesses must sometimes be reined in. The British Birds Rarities Committee has therefore published a "Birders' Code of Conduct" to let the twitching community know what sorts of behaviour won't fly. Sensibly enough, the guidance urges watchers not to obstruct emergency vehicles. Dogs should be kept on leads, and birds should not be disturbed at close quarters, especially during mating season when the playing of recorded birdsong can be disruptive. In extremis, twitchers are warned that disturbing rare birds is punishable by fines of £5,000 or six months in jail.

The need for such rules is in part welcome evidence of birdwatching's soaring popularity, especially among the young. Ten times as many members of Gen Z list birdwatching as a hobby as did back in 2018. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds boasts some 1.2 million members — numbers political parties could only dream of. With sensible new guidance, birdwatchers can now pursue their passion without having to get twitchy about their fellow hobbyists' indiscretions.

World

Spy agencies resort to human touch in hunt for Ayatollah

The search for Mojtaba Khamenei has spurned technology in favour of agents on the ground, writes **Michael Evans**

A billboard in Tehran depicts Iran's three supreme leaders: Ruhollah Khomeini, who founded the Islamic Republic, Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated in February, and his son, Mojtaba, the current ayatollah

It is the covert operation that is never officially discussed or confirmed but the hunt for Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei is preoccupying Mossad and the CIA.

While President Trump considers his next move in the war with Iran, Israel's foreign intelligence service and their American counterparts are jointly trying to trace the supreme leader who took power after his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in an Israeli airstrike on February 28.

The challenge for the world's most sophisticated intelligence agencies is that the target has gone silent.

Mojtaba appears not to have picked up a phone or opened a laptop for about 150 days. He is somewhere in a deep shelter, his face disfigured from injuries sustained in the airstrike that killed his father, and he does not dare emerge into daylight for fear of being spotted by an American spy satellite.

To track his father, Israel and the US used every cybertrick in the book, including hacking traffic cameras in Tehran to spot the vehicles used by the former supreme leader's bodyguards and associates. Technology, orchestrated by the American National Security Agency (NSA) and Israel's equivalent, known as Unit 8200, uncovered where Ali Khamenei and his principal military and intelligence officials would be on that day. They were all eliminated.

This time, it is different. Whether or not it makes sense to try to assassinate the new supreme leader when it is clear the military is really in charge of Iran, the fact remains that Mojtaba has a key role in the regime and decisions on military action and he has gone missing.

The key to pinpointing his location is human intelligence (humint), not eavesdropping and surveillance technology. There are still people in the intelligence community who believe he may be dead and that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is faking his survival to legitimise its war with the US.

So what is needed is proof of his existence and confirmation of where he is hiding, perhaps in one of the tunnels under Tehran or the military bunker close to the religious city of Qom, about 90 miles south of the capital.

With cybersleuthing less effective, Mossad, with its network of agents in Iran, many of them demoralised and disillusioned Iranian nationals, is prioritising its efforts on these two questions: Mojtaba's status and his whereabouts.

"The challenge for Israel is the same problem we had in trying to find and release hostages in Gaza," said Rami Igra, a former division chief of Mossad.

"Israeli intelligence controlled the whole of Gaza, every toilet was rigged [bugged] to trace where they were being held but we didn't find them. There was too much reliance on electronic technology and not enough on real people, human intelligence.

"Mojtaba may not be using a phone but if he exists at all, he has other forms of communication, like little pieces of paper. They are using multiple layers of couriers carrying messages. These couriers are unaware of what they're doing, other than taking messages from one person to the next. So, if they [Mossad] find him it will be because of a human element. But the regime in Tehran is aware of this danger."

Just as Osama bin Laden, the founder of al-Qaeda, was traced by the CIA through a courier, so Mossad's focus is on identifying and following those carrying messages to and from Mojtaba.

"The only real way to get to Mojtaba is to recruit an agent who is in contact with him," said Igra.

"But this is very difficult because there is tough screening in Iran of all people close to him, and probably only two or three members of the IRGC know how to contact him.

"We can also track other people using their phones and listen in on discussions about Mojtaba and where he might be. Iran is a country where the people are suffering from lack of money and we have ways of offering rewards on the internet," he said.

Are Mossad agents following key members of the regime to track Mojtaba? President Pezeshkian, for example, claimed he had spent two and half hours with the injured supreme leader and said he was fine.

"This is bullshit," Igra said. "The Iranian president never saw him."

Avner Avraham, a former lieutenant colonel in Mossad, identified another problem in the hunt for the Ayatollah. "They are also using doubles, just like Saddam Hussein did," he said. He added: "Mojtaba stays in different locations and people are employed to feed him. But what they don't know is whether the food they are providing is for the real Mojtaba or a double. So they go home at night and believe they are looking after the supreme leader when in fact he's probably a fake."

At some point, the Iranian people will demand to see their new supreme leader. He failed to appear for his father's funeral this month. They only evidence for his existence is several official statements about the war issued in his name.

Is it possible that to appease the Iranian people, Mojtaba might record a personal message, just like bin Laden used to do when he was hiding in the border area of Afghanistan and Pakistan?

"Even if he doesn't show his face, he could use his voice to give a message to the Iranian people," Avraham said. "But that could make him vulnerable. It's possible to glean information from the voice file, such as the type of recorder used and possibly the location where the voice was recorded."

A former senior US defence official said: "I am quite sure, given [the airstrike] on February 28, that Mojtaba is practising much better operational security and, as a result, human intelligence will be more important in the hunt for him. I am sceptical about US humint since Iran has been a denied area for 40 years. Israeli human intelligence is clearly much better but it also has its limits."

If Mossad and the CIA manage to establish Mojtaba's whereabouts, political leaders in the US and Israel will have to decide how to act on the information.

A former leading US intelligence official summed up their dilemma: "I think we have probably dispatched enough Iranian leaders for the time being, unless there is very strong confidence that the current leader will be replaced by someone committed to a democratic future for Iran and who will ride in on a white horse."

Anti-tourism protesters clash with Palma police

Police fired rubber bullets and charged protesters with batons as tens of thousands took to the streets to demand greater controls on tourism in Palma de Mallorca on Sunday (David Sharrock writes).

Organisers of the march, which police said was attended by 25,000 people, called for the right to better housing for residents and fewer tourists to be allowed to visit the island. Those behind the march said 70,000 had attended.

Tensions rose after police closed off access to Ses Voltes, a square in front of the city's cathedral where organisers were due to read out their manifesto, leaving many unable to join.

Dozens of officers, some with shields and rubber-bullet guns, were surrounded by

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France's richest man denies row over succession
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JOAN MATEU PARRA; MIQUEL A BORRAS/EPA

POLICIA
NACION

Police with batons, shields and rubber bullets confronted protesters in the Mallorcan city after they began throwing plastic bottles, leaving some with minor injuries

people chanting slogans including "I'd be ashamed to be a police officer" and "Out with the occupying forces".

When a small group of protesters threw plastic bottles, police fired rubber bullets and charged using batons. Paramedics treated eight people, two of whom were taken to hospital with minor injuries. One man was left with a bleeding head wound.

According to witnesses, some tourists passing through the area were indirectly caught up in the incident.

Dani Comas, a spokesman for the demonstration, said Mallorca was at breaking point and the regional government was not doing enough to solve the problems.

The march took place under the slogan: "For the right to decent housing. Stop 'touristification'."

Demonstrations also took place at the same time in Barcelona, San Sebastian and Granada.

Lidia Sintes, holding a banner reading "My home is not your hotel", said she was taking part "in defence of identity and in order to live with a normal rent". Her quality of life had diminished due to the tourist influx, she said.

The organisers said: "There is no room in Mallorca for more cars, no room for more hotels, no room for more tourist rentals, no room for more coffee franchises, fast food or cheesecake shops, and no room for more tourists."

More than 100,000 properties were devoted to legal or illegal tourist rentals, they said. "More and more of us are being pushed to leave," they added.

Mallorca attracted 13.5 million tourists last year.

Attacker who 'stabbed' three women in Paris was 'sent by Allah'

France
Adam Sage Paris

Three women have been stabbed in Paris and a man, who claimed to have been sent by Allah, has been arrested.

The alleged attacker, who is believed to have had two knives, was detained in Porte de Clichy, where the city's main courts complex is situated.

The victims were 19, 24 and 36. Geoffroy Boulard, the district mayor, said one of the women was pregnant.

Officials said two of the women, one of whom was stabbed in the lower back and the other in the abdomen, were in critical condition, although their lives were not believed to be in danger.

Witnesses said the attacker initially struck a woman waiting for a tram before stabbing two others close to Les Deux Coupoles brasserie.

Laurent Nuñez, the French interior minister, said the man was tackled by an off-duty police officer before being arrested. Nuñez paid tribute to the officer's bravery. A video on social media shows the man walking down the street and holding two knives. It then cuts to a second scene showing him being held on the ground by several people, apparently awaiting the arrival of police.

A police source said the man said: "Allah sent me to kill women."

Despite his reported words, the case is not being treated as a terror attack. The National Anti-Terrorism Prosecutor's Office said it was "observing" the case but that inquiries were being overseen by the Paris Prosecution Office.

Nuñez said: "We have to be very cautious about the motives behind this extremely violent act. The individual is making incoherent statements."

A police source said the attacker appeared to have mental health problems.

A witness told Le Parisien newspaper: "I saw a young woman stretched out on the ground in the bar. She had blood everywhere."

The alleged attacker in Paris is believed to have used two knives

Mohammed-Ali Bouhadjar, a salesman who said he had intervened with other passers-by, denied that the assailant had been stopped by a police officer. "I want people to understand that this was a civic and human act," he said.

He told Le Parisien that after leaving a supermarket: "I saw a man armed with two kitchen knives about 20cm long running after people to stab them."

He initially filmed the scene, but then put his phone away to intervene and to urge other passers-by to do the same.

"When I saw that he was stabbing a woman from behind, I shouted: 'Come on, let's catch him'," he said. "I tripped him up and he fell to the ground, and we all threw ourselves on him."

Kheira, an employee at a nearby kebab shop, said a waiter from the brasserie used a chair to hold the assailant down. Bouhadjar said that once on the ground, the assailant seemed "a bit lost". Djahel Ahmed, Bouhadjar's friend, who was also present, said he had asked the man why he had stabbed women in the street. "He said it was Allah who ordered him," said Ahmed.

Issa Besseka, who works at the brasserie, said he had seen the attacker "heading toward people and threatening them. He went towards a lady who hadn't seen him coming, and he started stabbing her in the shoulder and buttocks."

Merz blames lax extremism controls for killing at Pride

Germany
Elizabeth Rushton Berlin

Friedrich Merz, the German chancellor, has questioned his country's lax controls on extremists after a convicted Islamist attacked a Berlin Pride event.

"I cannot understand how I can track my mobile phone from anywhere in the world — or even use it to determine the location of my iPad, for instance — yet it is supposedly impossible, or technically unfeasible, for security authorities in Germany to determine the whereabouts of individuals classified as security threats to that same extent," Merz said yesterday.

"We will have to respond with prudence, but also with determination," he added.

A Polish woman, 65, was killed and 29 injured in the attack at the Christopher Street Day event on Saturday. The suspect, Abdul Ballout, 21, fled the scene but was later shot dead by police. His father, Tawfik Ballout, 64, said his son had been "brainwashed".

The authorities are facing questions about why Ballout, a German citizen known to police as an Islamist extremist, was able to carry out the attack. According to public broadcasters, police had even installed a camera near Ballout's house to monitor his movements.

In May last year, he attempted to join Islamic State in Syria but was unsuccessful. He was arrested on his return to Berlin and held until May, when he was convicted of planning a "state-endangering act of violence". Ballout was tried as a juvenile and given a suspended sentence as he was aged 20 when arrested.

GETTY IMAGES

In the pink The Yuncheng Salt Lake, in Shanxi province, China. The summer heat helps algae in the water to reproduce rapidly, which then produces vibrant colours

I would rather die than go home, vows Chinese dissident

China

Richard Spencer China Correspondent

It is hard to be a dissident. It is sometimes harder to be related to one.

When Qi Hong finally took the step he had long pondered, cutting off his ties to China with one irrevocable act of defiance, he told no one in advance.

He had prepared his move to Britain. His wife and teenage daughters, however, had no clue their lives were about to be uprooted for ever. They thought they were going on holiday. Only once they arrived did Qi, 44, tell them they were not going back.

His brother was arrested. His mother is slowly coming to terms with the fact that she is unlikely to see her son again. As for the extended family, suffice to say that he is now shut out of most of the group chats.

"I can't say my wife is happy here, no," he said. "My brother doesn't pick up when I try to call him. My nephew is still in prison — I had stayed with him, so they thought he was connected to what happened. They must all be very angry with me. But then, in China they have been persecuted before, in the Cultural Revolution for example, so they are scared of the authorities."

What "happened" was a form of protest typical of dissent in 21st century China, where social control has become scientific and universal, making political activism impossible. Qi's rebellion was as solitary as it was eccentric.

This time a year ago, Qi was just another working-class, middle-aged man living in provincial China, albeit with a taste for self-education. He reels off an impressive list of literary influences for a man with no higher education, including banned books like George Orwell's *1984*. But he was fed up with the Communist Party, and knowing there was no way of organising against it, decided to "do his bit" in his own way.

He rented a flat in the city of Chongqing. He rigged up a projector pointing at the university building opposite, and a couple of video cameras to record events, all connected to a laptop.

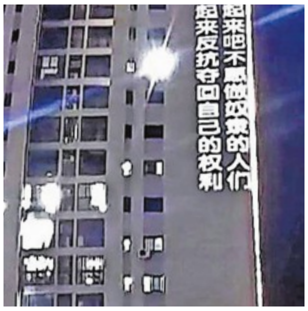
Once he had arrived in Britain with his family, he pressed "play" remotely. The university wall lit up with revolutionary slogans. "Down with red fascism, overthrow the communist tyranny," read one. Others read: "No lies, we want the truth" and "Tyrannical Communist Party, step down".

As an exercise in gadfly activism, it worked perfectly. The slogans circulated briefly on the Chinese internet, before being censored. Qi also circulated the images on overseas social media to which many Chinese have access via VPNs, plus video of policemen bursting into the room to disable the projector.

As an exercise in bringing down the Communist Party, the effect is harder to judge. President Xi's power, over his closest aides down to the humblest pensioner, is probably greater than that of any predecessor back to the peak years of the Qing dynasty in the 18th century.

There is a strong streak of pessimism among many dissidents, going back even before communism. Some believe that China's national culture inevitably makes its people accept dictatorship.

"The Communist Party is evil but it is the flower of Chinese culture," he said. "I have mixed feelings about Chinese people. I feel sorry for them: they work so hard, for no rights in return. But I despise a culture which always expects a strong leader to come and rescue them instead of fighting for their own rights."



Qi Hong's anti-communist slogans lit up a prominent building in Chongqing

This mindset has echoes going back at least as far as Lu Xun, the pre-revolutionary radical writer who is still venerated in China, including by the party. He portrayed China as a cannibalistic society, feeding on its own misery, and the Chinese as sleeping people suffocating in an iron chamber.

The party, naturally, believes it has itself "rescued" China from this state. But there are plenty who disagree and are as insistent as Qi that change is needed, however that comes. Divergence of thought is natural. In China it is often rooted in a past that is hard to discuss.

Qi grew up in the aftermath of persecution. His grandfather was in the Kuomintang — the nationalist party that was defeated in the Chinese civil war — and was jailed after the Communist takeover in 1949. His mother suffered discrimination throughout the Mao era as the daughter of a "black hand".

In 1996 his elder half-brother tried to find his grandfather in the labour camp in the far western region of Xinjiang where his mother had last seen him 14 years previously, but without luck. To this day, the family do not know when he died, let alone where he is buried.

Qi grew up in poverty but had bettered himself, training as an electrician and ending up working for a multinational property company.

He said there had been change from time to time. China became more open after Mao's death in 1976, but it was becoming more closed again. After trying to support himself in Britain, Qi was granted asylum, universal credit and accommodation. He said the Chinese authorities had yet to catch up with him.

He attends English classes, with the hope of going to university. His daughters, 13 and 16, are likely to get there faster, with the older one having had English language tuition at school in China. She has already sat two GCSEs.

His wife misses her family. "She would prefer to go home," Qi said. He can speak to his mother by phone but everyone else, he said, knew what the system was like and feared to cross it.

That in itself is enough for him to be determined to stick out life in a country he had never visited before his "holiday". He speaks with a bluntness characteristic of working-class dissent. "I would simply rather die than go home."

Russia hits ports while Ukraine strikes Rostov

Ukraine Russia struck three Ukrainian ports, including fuel loading and storage facilities that benefited the Ukrainian army at the port of Odesa, Russia's defence ministry said yesterday.

Moscow said Russian forces also carried out strikes on storage tanks containing fuel and lubricants intended for the Ukrainian army at the port of Chornomorsk and struck a cargo ship at the port of Mykolaiv that had delivered military supplies.

Overnight into yesterday, Ukrainian drones killed five people, including a child, in the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don, the regional governor said. Yury Slyusar added that apartment blocks, warehouses and a shelter for homeless people had been damaged. He said that air defence forces had shot down about 50 Ukrainian drones over his region and that Kyiv had targeted the cities of Rostov, Taganrog and four districts — Chertkovsky, Tarasovsky, Sholokhovsky and Millerovsky.

On Russia's Navy Day on Sunday, President Putin attended a ceremony featuring a poster of a naval submarine, rather than a parade of warships. Celebrations were suspended for the second year, possibly linked to concerns about Ukrainian drone attacks. Instead of showcasing its vessels, the authorities hosted concerts, museum exhibitions and commemorative ceremonies.

Russia's Navy Day ceremony held in front of a poster of a submarine

Kim lauds war veterans

North Korea Kim Jong-un met veterans and laid flowers at the graves of guerilla fighters to mark the 73rd anniversary of the end of the Korean War, the state news agency KCNA said. The supreme leader, who was joined by his daughter, repeated his claim of a "great victory" in the 1950-53 war, which ended with an armistice rather than a peace treaty.

Racism ruling upheld

Australia A court has rejected an appeal from Pauline Hanson, the leader of the right-wing One Nation party, to overturn a ruling that she racially discriminated against a Muslim senator by telling her to "piss off back to Pakistan". Judges in the Full Federal Court upheld a ruling that the tweet to Mehreen Faruqi of the Greens was unlawful.

Violence at rail protest

Italy Violent clashes over a new railway caused €1 million worth of damage in Piedmont at the weekend. The Lyon-Turin line aims to cut road and air travel with a faster rail route. Giorgia Meloni, the prime minister, said more than 120 officers had been hurt. "This is organised, premeditated violence and must be treated as such," she added.

Racism rears ugly head after black woman wins pageant

Italy

James Imam Milan

Being crowned Miss Bologna was a long-cherished dream for Marta Bunda. Beaming as the pageant organiser draped a silver sash across her shoulders and placed a crown on her head, Bunda, 25, savoured a moment that remains rare in Italy: the victory of a black woman in a significant beauty contest.

"It was a complete surprise, and I was absolutely thrilled when they called my name," she told The Times. "Ever since I was a little girl, I'd dreamt of a moment like this."

The joy, however, quickly faded when Bunda's social media accounts were inundated with racist abuse. Commenters sarcastically jibed that she looked "typically Bolognese" and had "classic Emilian traits", a reference to the Emilia-Romagna region whose capital is Bologna. Others accused the jury of political correctness and choosing her "only because she is black". The most offensive comments have been removed.

Bunda was taken aback. "I was expecting some controversy, but I never imagined it would lead to such nastiness," she said.

"It was as if I didn't have the right to be there. It highlighted a problem I hadn't fully realised still existed."

MISS ITALIA '96
COTONELLA

Bunda's victory came three decades after Denny Mendez, who was born in the Dominican Republic, became the first ethnic-minority winner of the Miss Italy title in 1996. Thirty years on, Bunda's experience has exposed the ugly side of Italy's race relations, raising questions about what it means to be Italian in an increasingly diverse society.

Many rallied behind Bunda, including Marco Pellegrini, the pageant's organiser, who said at the time: "Hearing these things still fills me with great sadness."

Mendez — now a prominent TV actress and glamour model known for her diversity and inclusion activism — also expressed solidarity, telling Bunda in a video message: "I experienced first-hand what you went through ... go on with your head held high."

Mendez said the fact she remained the only ethnic-minority Miss Italy winner in the 80-year history of the pageant "tells us that there is still a long way to go". She told The Times: "The problem is not [the identity of] the winner, but that some cannot accept that Italy is now multicultural."

Born in Imola, near Bologna, to Congolese migrants, Bunda received her first Italian passport only when she turned 18. Italy's laws determine citizenship by parents' nationalities rather than place of birth. About 50,000 foreign citizens were born in the country in 2024, 13.5 per cent of all births, according to the Istat statistics agency.

Bunda worked as a receptionist in Imola while studying for a degree in business and languages, and met Pellegrini at a Latin American dance event. By chance, she arrived just as a casting session for the beauty pageant at the same venue was drawing to a close.

Pellegrini encouraged her to take part. She hesitated for two months, convinced she would not get far, but eventually submitted her application.

After progressing through the selection rounds, she went on to beat 25 other contestants in the Miss Bologna final.

MARTA BUNDA/INSTAGRAM; ANSA/REUTERS

Marta Bunda received a torrent of racist online abuse after she was crowned Miss Bologna. Her success comes 30 years after Denny Mendez, below, won the Miss Italy title

Her victory earned her a place in the Miss Emilia-Romagna regional competition next month and, if successful there, a chance to compete in Miss Italy in the autumn.

It would be a striking victory. Italy is increasingly multicultural, with 5.4 million foreign citizens legally resident last year, an 8 per cent increase from ten years earlier.

A generation of successful black athletes has embodied this changing identity, including the volleyball national team player Paola Egonu, who was born in Italy to Nigerian parents, and the sprinter Marcell Jacobs, the 2020 Olympic 100m champion, who is the son of a black American serviceman.

Yet political opposition to multiculturalism remains potent. Roberto Vannacci, the former military general who launched a successful political party this year, suggested in a best-selling 2023 book that black people cannot be Italian, identifying Egonu as an example.

"The problem hasn't been solved," Bunda said of racism in Italy. "It's still there, so let's talk about it."

Others around the world have faced similar hostility. After winning Miss England 2021, Rehema Muthamia, then a 25-year-old health technology consultant, said she was subjected to online abuse because of her Kenyan heritage.

Bunda noted that many of the offensive messages came from people living outside Italy, including in Venezuela and the United States.

For Mendez, however, Bunda's story is already a powerful symbol. "Whenever a competition rewards merit rather than stereotypes, it sends a cultural message that is far more powerful than one might think," she said.

Bunda acknowledged that the intense media attention from her victory had helped to bring the issue of racial discrimination to a wider audience.

"If, in my own small way, I can help ensure that this issue remains in the spotlight and that we continue to fight prejudice, I'm absolutely determined to do my very best."

Tourists mocked for milking cow bell row

James Imam

Tourists come to the lush Brembana Valley for its fairytale villages, hiking trails snaking through the surrounding mountains, and, perhaps most of all, some peace and quiet.

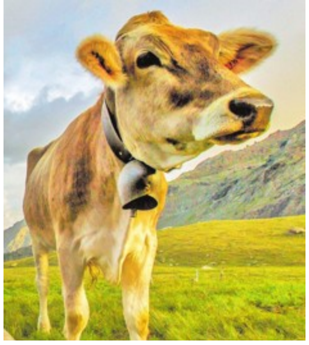
Those expectations, however, do not always meet the realities of countryside life. Now, a row has erupted after holidaymakers in the mountain village of Serina moaned about noisy cows.

A couple are trying to persuade the mayor of Serina, 30km north of Bergamo, to silence the bells worn by cows grazing near their holiday home.

"It's impossible to holiday in Serina with the cows' bells less than 10m from the block of flats, day and night," Piera Cristina Villa, a pensioner from near the town of Cremona, wrote on Facebook last week. "Some holidaymakers have already gone home. The mayor is nowhere to be found and doesn't reply."

Villa's husband, Giambattista Bergomi, wrote to the mayor in 2024 and asked him again to intervene last year.

"It's noise pollution," Bergomi said in a report broadcast on TG4, a television news programme, on Saturday. "If you are passing by, it is a magnificent thing, but try living with it around the clock."



Holiday home owners are claiming that cow bells are a form of noise pollution

Responding on social media, Michele Villarboito, the mayor, said cowbells were "part of our history and culture". He later posted a mock decree joking that he had "called the cows into the town hall to sign a gagging order", adding: "Unfortunately, they responded with a very unco-operative moo."

Villarboito told The Times that city dwellers escaping to the cooler mountains during summer often arrived with unrealistic expectations of rural life.

"Some people come expecting the rhythms and comfort of city life," he said. "People who spend all year in a city need time to adapt to nature."

His social media pages have since filled with messages of support. Some locals have jokingly suggested handing out earplugs, while others have proposed synchronising grazing times with visitors' afternoon naps.

Serina's population of 2,100 swells to 20,000 in summer. Alongside tourism, dairy farming is one of the main economic activities, with about 500 cows grazing on mountain pastures.

This isn't the first time that complaints about the sounds of rural life have riled up locals. In 2021, Ramón Canal, mayor of the coastal Asturian hamlet of Ribadesella, created a poster campaign warning townies that they would have to put up with the sound of church bells, cattle herds and tractors "working to feed you".

Elsewhere in Europe, however, local politicians have taken noise complaints more seriously. Last week, the mayor of the French village of Vindry-sur-Turdine, where a church bell rings every half hour, silenced it from 10pm to 6am after complaints from villagers.

Extreme heat prompts ban on horse-drawn carriages

James Imam

Horse-drawn carriages that carry tourists around Palermo are to be replaced by electric vehicles over fears that animals cannot cope with Italy's soaring temperatures.

Carriage operators' licences will be converted over the next year into permits for electric golf carts, tuk-tuks or vehicles designed to look like carriages.

Roberto Lagalla, the mayor of Palermo, said increasingly frequent heatwaves, which push the temperature in Sicily to nearly 40C, were behind the move.

"Animal welfare is a battle for civilisation," he said. "An issue that concerns respect for the rights of those who have no voice."

Animal rights groups welcomed the decision. The Anti-Vivisection League said it was a decision of "exceptional importance" in a city where the animals had been forced to work in extreme heat, over scorching asphalt and in noisy, polluted conditions.

Horse-drawn carriages were a common form of transport for passengers and goods in Palermo until the 1950s, when many operators began replacing traditional brightly coloured carts with rickshaw-style covered carriages.

Today 38 carriage operators — known in the local dialect as *gnuri* — are still active, according to the local newspaper La Sicilia.

However, images of exhausted horses collapsing in sweltering heat in Italy have become common in recent years.

This month a video of a horse collapsing on a bridge in Rome in almost 40C heat shocked Italians. Last year, a Palermo carriage owner was fined after his horse collapsed while working in extreme temperatures in the historic centre.

Not everyone supports the change, however. One Palermo carriage operator told the BBC: "I'm staying right here with my carriage. This horse will die with me. It puts food on my table."

While in decline, horse-drawn carriages remain a familiar sight in Naples, Rome and Florence. Verona banned them on animal welfare grounds in 2020.

Scientist 'hid child's death from gene therapy paper'

China

Richard Spencer China Correspondent

A leading Chinese neuroscientist is under investigation after excluding from a research paper on his new gene therapy technique the fact that its trial patient, a six-year-old girl, had died after undergoing it.

Zilong Qiu, a neuroscientist at the Songjiang Research Institute at Shanghai Jiaotong University, one of China's best-known institutions of higher education, is one of several researchers worldwide working on new gene therapy techniques. His experiment last year was an attempt to more precisely "edit" the genes of neurons in the brains of children with developmental disorders.

A week after receiving the therapy, which involved injecting viruses containing the "editing tool" into her spinal fluid, the girl died from a severe immune reaction.

Nevertheless, Qiu went ahead with the publication of a peer-reviewed paper in Nature magazine on the preliminary tests for the therapy conducted on animals. The paper was widely welcomed for holding out hope for children suffering from similar development disorders.

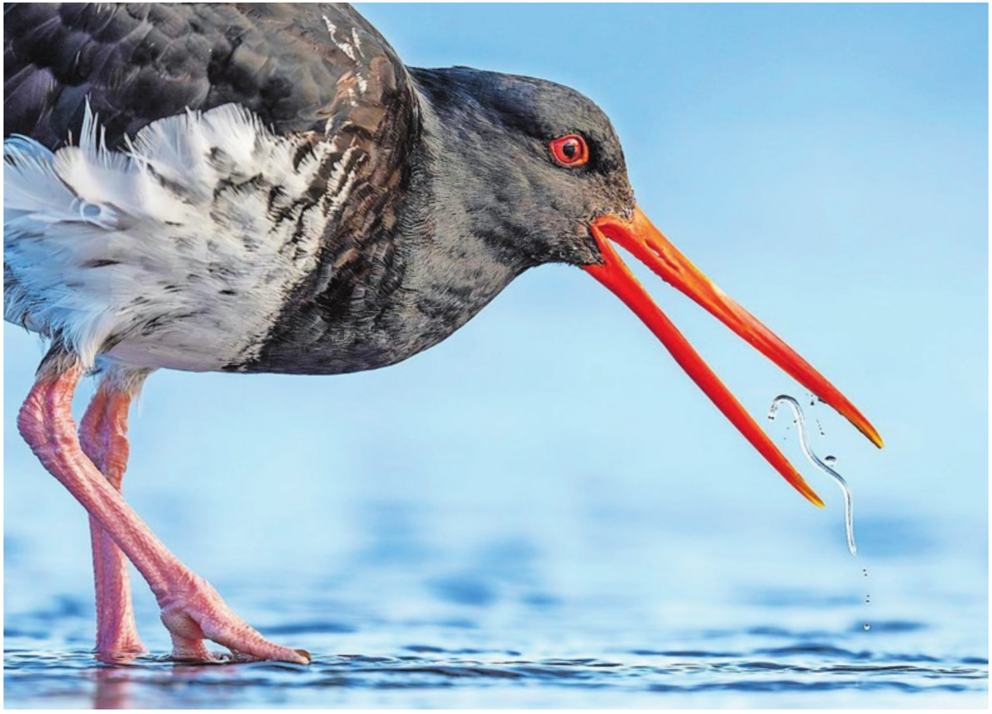
An original version of the paper, written before the child was treated but shown to her family, included details of her proposed therapy, but these had been removed before publication. Also omitted was the fact that the fees Qiu and his institution charged the girl's parents, amounting to $860,000 (£645,000), had effectively funded the trial.

The incident was revealed at the weekend by Science magazine, working with a watchdog organisation, Retraction Watch. They received no response to inquiries from Qiu or the university.

The girl's family had been told by the university that no action was being taken against Qiu, and that the research published in Nature was regarded as separate from their daughter's trial. However, since Science published its article, the authorities have swung into action. The university said it had set up a "special working group to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the case".

Nature said it had not been made aware of the outcome of the trial.

SIMON RUNTING/SOLENT NEWS



Slippery snack A peckish oystercatcher snaps up a tiny glass eel in the water at Muriwai Beach, near Auckland, New Zealand

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France's richest man denies succession row

France

Adam Sage Paris

Jean, Frédéric, Bernard and Antoine Arnault in 2023. Below, Delphine Arnault and her partner, Xavier Niel. Le Monde claims Niel is "hated" by some of the Arnault family

The luxury goods tycoon who is France's richest person has denied reports of family infighting over his succession.

Bernard Arnault, 77, said in an open letter published on the X account of LVMH, his company, that the members of his family were "all united".

The multi-billionaire added that anyone "gambling on a split in the family to sell papers [would] wait for a long time".

The tycoon was responding to a series of six articles about him in Le Monde, the last of which claimed that his children were jostling to take over from him amid a backdrop of rivalry and animosity.

All five hold positions of power within the group and its brands. Le Monde quoted Arnault as saying that his successor might be from outside the family. "But it's better if it's someone from the family," he added, according to the newspaper.

Arnault has two children from his first marriage to Anne Dewavrin: Delphine Arnault, 51, who is chief executive of Christian Dior; and Antoine Arnault, 49, LVMH's director of image and environment, and also a director of Paris FC, the first division football club owned by the family. He has three children with his second wife, the concert pianist Hélène Mercier-Arnault, 66: Alexandre Arnault, 34, the deputy chief executive of Moët Hennessy champagne; Frédéric Arnault, 31, the chief executive of the Italian fashion house Loro Piana; and Jean Arnault, 27, the watch director at Louis Vuitton.

Le Monde claimed that by giving them all high-ranking posts within LVMH, Arnault had "made them rivals and weakened both his family and his group".

The daily claimed that Alexandre Arnault coveted his sister's post at Dior, but had been criticised for his performance at the head of Tiffany & Co, the US jewellery brand which was acquired by LVMH. It also claimed he was viewed by other members of the family as ostentatious, notably because of his marriage in Venice in 2021 to Géraldine Guyot, the founder of Destrée, a fashion brand.

Le Monde wrote that Frédéric Arnault held Antoine, who is in charge of LVMH's public relations strategy, responsible for the sometimes negative portraits of him and Alexandre that have appeared in the media. The newspaper said Frédéric had taken on his own public relations consultant.

According to Le Monde, another conflict within the family pitted Arnault's second wife against Xavier Niel, the partner of Delphine Arnault. Niel is a powerful telecommunications tycoon who is set to become Vodafone's biggest shareholder and is a billionaire himself. Paris is awash with rumours that he would like to take over LVMH although its corporate statutes appear to rule this out.

Niel was an important shareholder in Le Monde before transferring his stock to an endowment fund.

Mercier-Arnault was quoted by Le Monde as saying that Niel did not fit in with the rest of the household.

"He has never been integrated into the family," she was quoted as saying.

The daily said her "hatred" of him had reached such a level that he was no longer invited for Christmas.

It also quoted her as criticising Antoine's public relations skills, saying he "does not protect his father enough" and "shouldn't handle his communication".

The daily said Niel and Delphine and Antoine Arnault claimed that Mercier-Arnault's mind was "wandering".

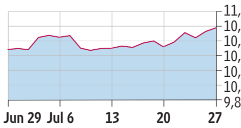
Arnault's response was a mixture of irony and cold anger. He said he had invited Le Monde's journalists to meet him and his children and had been "punished for his transparency".

Antoine told Le Monde that there were "no problems" between family members, "just micro-issues [that have been] whipped up. Some people like stirring things up".

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
10,781.75 (+45.52) ▲



Dow Jones
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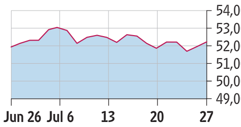
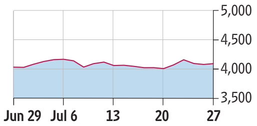
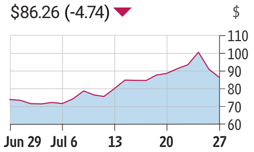


COMMODITIES

Gold
$4,084.35 (+7.30) ▲

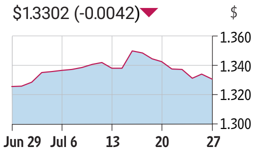


Brent crude (6pm)
$86.26 (-4.74) ▼

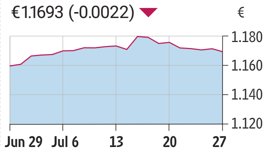


CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.3302 (-0.0042) ▼



£/€
€1.1693 (-0.0022) ▼



Crude price falls after US and Iran pause strikes for talks led by Oman

Martin Strydom
Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

The price of oil tumbled after the US and Iran ceased fighting and Oman led diplomatic efforts to get ships moving through the Strait of Hormuz again.

Brent crude, the international oil price benchmark, fell by about 10 per cent a barrel, having cleared $100 a barrel at the end of last week, reaching a low of $87.64. That decline tempered during afternoon trading, with prices exceeding $90 a barrel again. West Texas Intermediate, another price market, dropped by a similar degree.

The halt in hostilities will again raise hopes that a solution can be found to de-escalate the conflict in the Middle East and end the disruption to shipping through the strait.

On Sunday, Mike Waltz, the US ambassador to the United Nations, told Fox News that President Trump had decided to pause US strikes in order to allow the opportunity for talks between the two sides. Iran said it would halt attacks so long as the US did the same, with the American military understood to be concerned about dwindling supplies of missiles.

Yet over the weekend, Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis still attacked Saudi oil installations along the Red Sea coast, threatening another waterway vital to the global oil trade. The development has raised the possibility of vessels diverting to avoid the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which is used by Suez Canal traffic, just as they did in 2023 amid Houthi strikes.

Members of the Omani government led talks in Tehran on Friday and Saturday in an effort to pave the way towards an agreement to allow vessels to pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

The Iranian regime hailed the negotiations as "fruitful" and said "some progress was made".

European stocks squeezed out gains yesterday. London's FTSE 100 rose by 0.42 per cent and the Stoxx Europe 600 was up by 0.02 per cent. In the US the S&P 500 opened 0.29 per cent lower.

The decline in oil prices eased inflationary concerns among investors, sparking a rally in government bonds before key interest rate decisions from the Bank of England, US Federal Reserve and Bank of Japan this week.

The yield on the benchmark ten-year UK government bond dipped by as much as 0.07 percentage points to 4.97 per cent, while the yield on the German equivalent fell by 0.06 percentage points to 3.12 per cent. US Treasury yields also fell.

Bitcoin declined by 0.6 per cent to $64,937 and the price of an ounce of gold jumped by 0.65 per cent to $4,079.

Drugs boss denies AI will hit jobs

AstraZeneca chief says it will make staff 'faster'

Alex Ralph
Chief Business Correspondent

Artificial intelligence will not "kill" large numbers of jobs and will instead help to boost productivity, according to the chief executive of AstraZeneca, one of Britain's biggest public companies

Sir Pascal Soriot said AI was making operations "faster and smarter" and that he does not expect a "big reduction of headcount" at the pharmaceutical group or in the life sciences industry.

The comments from the FTSE 100 leader come as companies around the world race to invest in AI and deploy it, fuelling fears that the technology could lead to widespread job losses.

"I personally think that the story about AI killing jobs is a bit of a fake story, honestly," Soriot, 67, said.

"It may apply to some industries, but in many industries, certainly like ours, it will make people faster and smarter ... because I mean, the responses you get, the help you get, the interaction you can get with good AI tools really makes you more efficient.

"So it will lift our productivity. We'll produce more products — hopefully, better-quality products — faster."

He added: "There are areas and tasks that will of course be impacted and where headcounts may reduce, but overall I don't think we will see a big reduction of headcount — at least not in our industry and certainly not in our company."

Soriot, who was speaking after AstraZeneca's encouraging half-year results announcement, said the company must operate at "Chinese speed" to avoid falling behind the rapid innovation coming out of the country, where AstraZeneca has invested billions and struck numerous partnerships.

A number of multinationals have set out job cuts in recent months, with some citing AI. They include British American Tobacco, the London-headquartered maker of Dunhill cigarettes and Vuse vapes, which said last month that out of a 47,000-strong workforce, about 9,000 jobs are set to be affected by a £600 million shake-up partly driven by AI.

Paul Thwaite, the boss of NatWest Group, said in June that the shape of the bank's 60,000 workforce "is definitely going to change" as it deploys AI.

Georges Elhedery, the HSBC chief executive, said in May that "we all know generative AI will destroy certain jobs and will create new jobs". John Waldron, president and chief operating officer of Goldman Sachs, described the Wall St bank as a "human assembly line" that could be automated.

In its annual assessment this month of the long-term outlook for the public finances, the Office for Budget Responsibility, the government's fiscal watchdog, estimated that 10 per cent of the labour force was "exposed" to substitution by AI in the next decade, but that just under a third of jobs could be complemented by the technology, potentially boosting productivity.

Soriot confident of meeting $80 billion sales target, pages 32-33

DEREK IRONSIDE/NEWSLINE

Sir Ian Wood was knighted in 1994 for services to the oil and gas industry

Oil tycoon Sir Ian Wood dies aged 84

David Leask
Greig Cameron Scottish Business Editor

Sir Ian Wood, one of Britain's most significant oil and gas figures, has died, prompting tributes from the business and political worlds.

Wood, 84, died peacefully at home surrounded by his family.

John Swinney, the SNP first minister, said Wood had "helped shape modern Scotland". Sir Tom Hunter, another Scottish billionaire, called him a hero.

Wood, who was born and raised in Aberdeen, was best known for building the international engineering consultancy Wood Group. He grew the company out of his family fishing business, John Wood & Son, where he became managing director in 1967, just three years after graduating with a psychology degree from Aberdeen University.

By 1982, Wood Group was spun off as a separate company providing operations, design and maintenance services to the oil industry around the world. It was floated on the London Stock Exchange in 2002 and became a member of the FTSE 100 index. Wood stepped down as chief executive in 2006 but remained as chairman until 2012.

In 2014, Wood was hired by the UK government to outline the future prospects for the oil and gas sector. The Wood review advocated for maximising the economic recovery from the North Sea and laid out a path through to 2050 for the industry.

Also in 2014, there was a rare intervention in politics when Wood came out against Scottish independence before the referendum that year.

Alongside his business life, he had a commitment to philanthropy with the Wood Foundation working on projects in the UK and Africa. More recently Wood had supported Opportunity North East, an economic development agency helping to diversify the economy in the northeast of Scotland.

His family said in a statement: "Sir

Continued on page 28

Need to know

1 Gas prices are "almost guaranteed" to stay high through this winter and into next year as low levels of gas storage in Europe threaten a supply crisis, analysts at Wood Mackenzie have warned. **Page 2**

2 Artificial intelligence will not "kill" large numbers of jobs and will instead help to boost productivity, according to the chief executive of AstraZeneca. Sir Pascal Soriot said he does not expect a "big reduction of headcount" at the pharmaceutical group or in the life sciences industry. **Page 27**

3 The price of oil tumbled after the United States and Iran ceased fighting for the first time in weeks. Brent crude, the oil price benchmark, slid by about 10 per cent, having cleared $100 a barrel at the end of last week, reaching a low of $87.64 at one stage yesterday. **Page 27**

4 Sir Ian Wood, one of Britain's most significant oil and gas figures, has died aged 84. John Swinney, the SNP first minister, said he had "helped shape modern Scotland". Sir Tom Hunter, the Scottish billionaire, called him a hero. **Page 27**

5 China's leading memory chipmaker CXMT became the country's most valuable company after rising 466 per cent on its market debut.

6 The Conservative Party chairman, Kevin Hollinrake, has urged the Treasury select committee to intervene to ensure the publication of a long-delayed review into whether Lloyds Banking Group tried to cover up a £1 billion scam. **Page 30**

7 Sir Pascal Soriot has said he is "absolutely confident" of AstraZeneca hitting a headline $80 billion sales target for 2030 but said the company must operate at "Chinese speed" to continue innovating in the years ahead. **Pages 32-33**

8 Vodafone has raised its profits guidance for the year, in the telecoms group's first results since the French billionaire Xavier Niel became its largest shareholder. **Page 35**

> "The AI race has reversed the traditional roles of hegemon, in this case the US, and challenger, China
>
> **Mehreen Khan, page 31**

For expert business analysis subscribe to the business newsletter thetimes.com/newsletters

Memory chipmaker soars 466% on its debut

Martin Strydom

China's leading memory chipmaker CXMT became the country's most valuable company after rising 466 per cent on its market debut.

The shares jumped from a float price of 8.66 yuan a share, valuing the company at $85.5 billion, to 49 yuan, giving it a market capitalisation of 3.3 trillion yuan ($488 billion), overtaking Industrial and Commercial Bank of China as the country's most valuable company.

The chipmaker's first-day gain also eclipsed the debut performance of China Resources New Energy, whose shares more than doubled after a $3.6 billion IPO this month.

The rise reflects domestic investors' bullish sentiment towards the memory chip company, which is a key part of Beijing's drive to build a self-sufficient chip industry.

The Chinese government, which held 36.29 per cent of CXMT before the float, is increasingly counting on homegrown hardware to boost its position in the AI race against the United States, which has restricted China's access to advanced chips. The successful debut came amid a sell-off in global technology stocks on concerns about multibillion-dollar spending on AI.

CMXT, or ChangXin Memory Technologies, is the world's fourth-largest maker of Dram (dynamic random access memory) chips, with an 8 per cent market share.

It wants to rival South Korea's Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix, and the US giant Micron, which have seen profits and share prices jump recently, boosted by the push to build data centres that power artificial intelligence.

Advanced memory chips are in huge demand for their key role in AI servers, alongside other powerful data-crunching semiconductors made by companies such as Nvidia. That has created a major shortage of the less flashy Dram chips used in laptops, phones and other electronics, pushing up prices.

Only 6.73 per cent of CXMT's enlarged share capital was freely tradable at the listing as most shares are locked up, which is expected to magnify price swings. Some market analysts are sceptical about whether the jump in the shares can be sustained.

Jing Jie Yu, equity analyst at Morningstar, said the deal was priced at a steep discount. He argued the stock's first-day rise was excessive, pointing to the memory sector's cyclical nature and the longer-term drag from US export controls that restrict access to advanced chipmaking technology.

Yu said: "Investor appetite is largely being driven by providing Chinese investors a way to meaningfully get exposure to the current memory supercycle."

CXMT's big jump has led to concerns about a bubble. The company's growing dominance in China has enabled it to raise prices for customers such as Huawei. Yuan Yuwei, hedge fund manager at Trinity Synergy Investments, said the stock was "too expensive and smells of speculation", adding that "it's hard to say the optimism is sustainable".

In its prospectus, CXMT said the growing appetite for AI had driven demand for memory chips but cautioned the market could weaken if AI investment slowed. The company expects first-half revenue to rise more than sevenfold to between 110 billion and 120 billion yuan, with net profit of between 66 billion and 75 billion yuan, reversing a loss in the previous year.

CXMT is not the only chipmaker whose shares have benefited hugely from the AI boom. SK Hynix rose 13 per cent on its first day of trading this month on Wall Street, capping one of the world's biggest ever stock sales. Its market capitalisation on Seoul's Kospi index rose past $1 trillion in May.

● Nvidia is set to invest $5 billion in the start-up co-founded by OpenAI's former chief scientist Ilya Sutskever. The investment in Safe Superintelligence is part of a partnership that will boost the Israeli-American artificial intelligence business's available computing resources, the companies said.

Trump ban on Chinese AI could backfire, Mehreen Khan, page 31

Zhu Yiming, left, added more than $12 billion to his fortune after CXMT, the

Profile

Founded only a decade ago, ChangXin Memory Technologies is the world's fourth-largest memory chipmaker by market share, behind Samsung Electronics, SK Hynix and Micron (Charlotte Bend writes).

Zhu Yiming, 54, the chairman and founder of CXMT, added more than $12 billion to his fortune after the company's listing yesterday in

DCC agrees takeover by private equity

Helen Cahill Financial Correspondent

A FTSE 100 energy group has recommended that shareholders accept a £5.75 billion bid from a consortium of private equity firms as the buy-up of London's listed companies picks up pace.

DCC Energy has agreed to the bid from KKR, the American private equity firm, and Energy Capital Partners, a subsidiary of Bridgepoint, despite facing initial opposition from a number of the group's shareholders.

The private equity firms have offered cash of £65.25 a share and agreed to deliver the 147.2p-a-share final dividend previously promised to investors. The consortium has also agreed to pay up to £1.25 a share if DCC secures at least $800 million from a sale of Nexora, its technology distribution business.

Shares in DCC closed up by 55p, or 0.9 per cent, at £63.40 last night.

Donal Murphy, DCC chief executive, said the transaction provided a "compelling opportunity" for shareholders to exit at a premium of 24 per cent to the group's undisturbed share price.

DCC initially rejected a £58-a-share offer from KKR and ECP, but later said it was "minded to recommend" a deal comprising cash of £65.25 a share, plus the dividend.

Murphy said the group had "worked hard" to raise the group's market capitalisation during its time on listed markets but that private infrastructure firms had valued the business more highly.

He added: "The value hasn't been created in the share price. We've created very significant intrinsic value but it hasn't reflected into the public market.

"So, 90 days ago we got a knock on the door from KKR and ECP. It was very easy to reject their first offer but given our fiduciary duties to our shareholders, we interacted with them and over 90 days we've ended up with an offer on the table that we believe is very compelling from our shareholders' perspective.

"While we very much believe in our strategy, the offer that's on the table creates compelling value for shareholders, in cash, now. We think the majority of our shareholders will be in favour of the transaction."

The private equity offer faced opposition from major shareholders, including Fidelity, Aviva and Jim Flavin, the founder of the company, whose headquarters are in Dublin.

Matt Bennison, of Aviva Investors, said he would be "disappointed" if the board recommended an offer at £65.25 a share, while Flavin described the valuation as "miserable".

Bennison added: "We firmly believe that it is not in the interest of our clients to sell the business at this level.

"It would represent a bad outcome for shareholders and accordingly we would not support it were the board to recommend it."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

Tributes to Sir Ian Wood

Ian dedicated his life to building opportunities for others. Through the growth of the business that bore his family name and through decades of philanthropic work, he sought to create lasting positive change both in Scotland and around the world.

"He felt deeply that good fortune in life carries with it a responsibility to help others realise their own full potential."

Swinney said: "Sir Ian Wood stands as one of Scotland's most influential business leaders and philanthropists, a figure whose vision, determination and generosity have left a lasting mark on the nation and far beyond."

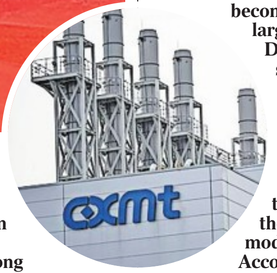
Lord Cameron of Chipping Norton, the former prime minister, said: "Sir Ian Wood was one of Scotland's great entrepreneurs and industrial leaders, a true titan of Scottish industry."

Wood is survived by his wife, Lady Helen, three children and seven grandchildren.

Obituary, page 43

LI XUKUI/NBD/VCG/GETTY IMAGES

company he founded while in his 20s, listed in Shanghai



Shanghai. Zhu decided to set up his own company in his 20s while working as an engineer in Silicon Valley, having studied electrical engineering at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

According to a 2008 interview with Tsinghua University in Beijing, where Zhu graduated with a master's degree in physics, the billionaire viewed China as "already the world", believing the opportunities back home were far greater than abroad. His long-term ambition was "to be the biggest memory designer and maker in China", according to emails seen by the Hong Kong-based newspaper the South China Morning Post that were retained by Li Jun, one of Zhu's earliest investors.

After making a pitch to Li in a Starbucks in Silicon Valley, Zhu quit his job and registered GigaDevice Semiconductor. He applied for a patent with another engineer, Shu Qingming, for the design they had been working on in a garage rented to them by an investor.

Despite struggling to win over large electronics manufacturers at first, GigaDevice eventually grew into one of China's leading chip-design companies and listed in Shanghai in August 2016.

That year, Zhu launched CXMT with the help of the Hefei municipal government in eastern China. By 2018 he had stepped back from GigaDevice to focus on CXMT and reportedly pledged not to draw a salary from the company until the memory-chip project became profitable. It did last year, after a loss of $2.4 billion in 2023.

In 2019, CXMT began producing its first self-designed mainstream memory chip, after Zhu had secured licences to patents originally developed by Qimonda, a failed German memory maker spun out of Infineon Technologies. This gave mainland China its first meaningful foothold in a market dominated by manufacturers overseas.

A breakthrough also arrived that year in the form of a patent licence agreement with WiLan, a Canadian licensing company that offered CXMT access to a substantial portfolio of Dram (dynamic random-access memory) patents and technical documents.

As artificial intelligence led to a boom in demand for memory, CXMT's fortunes took a turn from its loss-making years when it focused on building factories and recruiting engineers. Apple has reportedly taken an interest, lobbying the US authorities for clearance to use the chips after the Pentagon placed the manufacturer on a military blacklist for its ties to Beijing.

CXMT has grown to become the country's largest producer of Dram, a type of semiconductor memory used for devices from servers, cameras and mobile phones to personal computers and tablets. It also stores the data that AI models need.

According to its prospectus, CXMT includes Alibaba, ByteDance and Tencent among its customers as well as selling to device makers from Lenovo to Xiaomi.

According to the research firm Morningstar, more than 97 per cent of sales last year came from the Greater China region.

Agatha Christie still makes a killing

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

Five decades after Dame Agatha Christie penned her final mystery, the trail has not gone cold — and neither has the cash flow. Modern revivals such as Netflix's *Seven Dials* prove that the world's hunger for the queen of crime's deadly intrigue is as potent as ever.

Agatha Christie Limited, led by the author's great-grandson James Prichard, made pre-tax profits of £20 million in the year to the end of December, up from £13.7 million the year before.

The company, whose ownership is split between her family and the US-based film company RLJ Entertainment, paid out a dividend of £9.25 million, compared with £5.3 million the year before.

Revenue increased to £33 million from £22.7 million in 2024, primarily driven by increases to publishing, TV distribution and licensing revenues.

New content included *Tommy & Tuppence* for BritBox and *Towards Zero* for the BBC and BritBox. A new *Miss Marple* continuation novel written by Lucy Foley was also delivered.

Accounts filed with Companies House stated that Poirot and Marple series produced by LWT/ITV Studios between 1989 and 2013 continue to sell strongly around the world, "demonstrating consistent customer appetite for evergreen Agatha Christie adaptations as well as for the newer content, and a solid, reliable financial tail".

Mia McKenna-Bruce in the Netflix production of Seven Dials

The company said it continued to focus on TV, film, stage and publishing and was "actively looking" at opportunities for growth in all categories. "New TV productions and feature films are important to the group not only because of the revenue generated directly through licence fees, broadcast fees and distribution income, but also because of the indirect impact on other areas of the business such as publishing," it added.

Agatha Christie became a global name through her clever plots, detectives like Hercule Poirot and her own disappearance in 1926.

She wrote 66 detective novels and sold more than two billion copies, making her history's bestselling fiction writer. Her most famous works include *Murder on the Orient Express* and the stage play *The Mousetrap*.

Agatha Christie Limited was founded in 1955 by the author to manage her literary and media rights. AMC Networks has an 83 per cent stake in RLJ, which holds a 64 per cent stake in Agatha Christie Limited.

Can Burnham follow the Chinese way?

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *James Hurley*

A Chinese chipmaker's blockbuster debut might not be the most obvious place to look for support for Andy Burnham's drive to boost regional growth.

Yet one aspect of the remarkable rise of CXMT, whose shares surged by 466 per cent in Shanghai, demonstrates the rewards on offer for local leaders who back entrepreneurs. More than 1,000 miles away from China's famous technology hubs of Beijing and Shenzhen lies the "venture capital city" of Hefei, where the city government takes an active role in backing promising tech ventures.

Alongside involvement in the state-owned enterprises that are a pillar of the national economy, Hefei makes equity bets to such a degree that it has been called "China's most aggressive venture capitalist".

The city is a world leader in scientific research and now has a listed giant to show for it, partly due to the billions of dollars that the local government poured into CXMT, whose post-float rally pushed its market value to 3.3 trillion yuan ($488 billion), making it the most valuable firm in mainland China.

It may seem hard to believe in an era of unprecedented spending on AI infrastructure, but private investors initially thought the plans of CXMT founder Zhu Yiming were too risky as he pursued an apparently quixotic venture to break into the chipmaking oligopoly of Samsung, SK Hynix and Micron.

Hefei stepped in, taking an 80 per cent stake in the first stage of what became a 150 billion yuan, manufacturing project. Crucially, the city backed CXMT through successive funding rounds and still owns more than a third of it. The investment has helped to transform Hefei from a relative backwater into a major technology hub, with more than 6,000 tech firms.

These include NIO, an electric vehicle maker that Hefei rescued from the brink of bankruptcy on the condition it moved operations there. When NIO recovered, Hefei cashed out much of its stake — a tactic more associated with venture capitalists than communist officials.

Amid concerns that China's slowing economy might be exposing a strategy too reliant on centralised, state-led investment, what Chinese media call the "Hefei model" may offer a new approach: local-led integration of public and private entrepreneurship and a way to regenerate "under-developed" cities.

Andy Burnham is keen to do something similar. Yesterday, he was boasting how the state-owned British Business Bank would back plans from a consortium of pension providers to launch a "UK scale-up fund" to back promising science and technology businesses. Perhaps predictably, Burnham said the scheme would "help unlock good growth in every postcode".

The first problem with that is lack of scale. The new fund is expected to manage more than £1 billion, which might help to get some promising companies off to a good start but won't make a dent in the nation's growing problem with getting its best companies to scale before they are snapped up by overseas buyers.

The bank also provides localised funding pots in areas including Northern Ireland, Wales, the Midlands and the South West. Once again, though, the scale is relatively modest. While the agency has become an important funder of scale-ups, innovation and entrepreneurs, it is underpowered.

Then there's the question of whether local areas have enough of a say over how funds are spent.

Previous attempts to move investment programmes and decision-making away from Westminster have floundered.

With Burnham's plans to allow regions to do more to determine their own destinies, including by backing the private sector, one of many challenges he faces is working out how a local-led investment model can survive political cycles.

Hefei's CXMT investment paid off in a decade. The entire structure behind the UK's last devolution drive lasted only three years longer than that.

Get on with it

In 2017 on the same day that Theresa May answered her final PMQs before what would be a disastrous general election for her, a former High Court judge was being appointed to lead a review into whether Lloyds had covered up a £1 billion bank fraud.

The UK has had five more prime ministers since that April day and surviving victims of the lending scam are still waiting for Dame Linda Dobbs's report, which was supposed to take a "matter of months".

Dobbs has blamed factors such as the complexity of the case, the frequent emergence of new evidence and a lack of ability to compel witnesses for examination of the fraud, which saw criminals steal from HBOS via small and medium-sized companies, ruining livelihoods in the process.

Along with the fact that victims are getting sick and dying before they get to hear the findings, the glacial progress may also play into the hands of Lloyds, which rescued HBOS in 2009. By the time the report emerges, the bank will be able to point to the "historic" nature of any misconduct and perhaps offer some corporate babble about lessons having been learnt.

Is it wrong to assume Dobbs, 75, will be critical in her report before it lands? Probably not.

In an obscure corner of the Lloyds website, there is a section, last updated in May, where the bank says "there are a number of key lessons which we are already seeking to reflect". These include admissions about being "overly defensive and legalistic"; a lack of "understanding and empathy for victims"; "friction" with the police investigation; and not enough "interrogation and consideration by the wider management team" of the scam.

It's a safe bet that the report will not be pretty for Lloyds. Victims will hope they live long enough to read it.

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Discounts on beer for football World Cup slow shop price inflation

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

Discounts on snacks and alcohol during the Fifa World Cup and the launch of summer clothing sales helped to keep a lid on shop price inflation in the past month.

Figures from the British Retail Consortium and NielsenIQ released today show that prices in shops rose by 0.9 per cent on an annual basis in July, down from an increase of 1.2 per cent in the previous month. On a monthly basis, prices declined by 0.1 per cent.

Experts at the consortium, the sector's lobby group, said that deals on beer and other alcoholic drinks tied to the World Cup pushed down overall shop price inflation in July.

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the British Retail Consortium, said: "Shoppers benefited from deals on snacks and alcoholic drinks during the football World Cup, while clothing and footwear retailers offered significant discounts as they started clearing summer stock."

Temporary price reductions are likely to have stimulated consumer spending in recent months, with retail sales rising by 1 per cent in June. Consumer confidence has also gained momentum, lifted by the World Cup and record hot weather this summer.

Prices rose by 0.9 per cent in July as retailers helped stoke football fever

"We can expect promotions to continue to be an important part of driving demand for the rest of the summer," Mike Watkins, head of retailer and business insight at NielsenIQ, said.

Dickinson added: "Some categories, including electricals and health and beauty, saw higher inflation as rising chip prices and manufacturing costs fed through."

The BRC-NielsenIQ figures are likely to have been noted by rate setters at the Bank of England, who will announce their latest interest rate decision on Thursday. The monetary policy committee is expected to leave rates unchanged at 3.75 per cent for the fifth consecutive meeting.

Food prices rose by 2.2 per cent year-on-year in July, the BRC-Nielsen IQ data revealed, compared with an annual increase of 2.4 per cent in June.

Separate data released by the Office for National Statistics showed that the consumer prices index, the UK's official inflation measurement, climbed by 2.6 per cent in the year to June. The BRC-NiselsenIQ numbers are seen as a precursor to the ONS's official inflation estimate.

CN-STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Flying colours The imported iron ore terminals of Qingdao Port, Shandong province, China, hold the record for one crane unloading the mineral: 3,057 tonnes an hour

Tory chairman attacks delay in Dobbs review on HBOS scam

James Hurley Assistant Business Editor

The Conservative Party chairman has urged the Treasury select committee to intervene to ensure the publication of a long-delayed review into whether Lloyds Banking Group tried to cover up a £1 billion scam.

Kevin Hollinrake, a former member of the committee, said MPs should use their "powers to seek answers from Lloyds" and from Dame Linda Dobbs, the retired High Court judge leading the investigation. MPs should demand to know when the review will be published, seek assurances it will be published in full and ask what "exceptional circumstances" there are to justify any further delays, he said.

In a letter to Dame Meg Hillier, the committee's chairwoman, he said there "can be no justification for an independent review of such significance remaining unpublished indefinitely".

The Dobbs review into a scam at HBOS, which Lloyds rescued in 2009, was commissioned in April 2017 but is still not complete and there is uncertainty over whether it will ever be published in full.

The inquiry relates to Lloyds's response to a fraud linked to the Reading branch of HBOS, where bankers and business consultants exploited reckless credit policies to steal from the lender. Lynden Scourfield, a banker, arranged for customers to appoint and pay fees to third-party consultants as a condition of continued bank support.

Scores of small and medium-sized businesses were wrecked and hundreds more were caught up in the fallout. Six people were jailed in February 2017 and Judge Martin Beddoe concluded that the affair had left people "cheated, defeated and penniless".

Kevin Hollinrake says MPs must demand the review is published in full

The scam was brought to the attention of Lloyds during, or shortly after, the HBOS merger but victims allege the bank tried to cover it up, foreclosed on affected companies and did not fully co-operate with the police inquiry.

It is understood that Dobbs is due to issue her latest update in September.

Her investigation has become one of the most protracted in British history. It is unrelated to a separate compensation exercise, also not yet complete.

Hollinrake told The Times that the committee should ask Lloyds how much the review has cost the bank so far. The bank has not disclosed the costs of the review but has taken close to £1.3 billion of charges in relation to the affair, including compensation costs.

In his letter to Hillier, Hollinrake wrote: "Despite repeated assurances that progress is being made, there remains no timetable for publication. The most recent update indicated that evidence gathering was substantially complete, yet victims are still waiting for answers. This delay is no longer simply frustrating. It risks denying justice altogether.

"Many of those whose businesses, livelihoods and health were destroyed by the scandal have already died. Others are elderly or seriously unwell. Every month that passes increases the likelihood that more victims will die without ever knowing the full truth about what happened, what was known within HBOS and Lloyds Banking Group, and whether opportunities to prevent or stop the wrongdoing were missed."

Lloyds has said that it will publish "findings" of the review but has not commented on whether it will publish the full report.

Hollinrake said there was a wider public interest in the review because it "represents one of the most serious banking scandals in modern British history. The questions it raises about corporate governance, accountability, regulatory oversight and culture within one of Britain's largest banks remain unresolved."

He added: "There comes a point where delay undermines the very purpose of the exercise. Parliamentary scrutiny is essential to ensure transparency and accountability."

Hollinrake also wrote to Dobbs to say he was "increasingly concerned that the pursuit of a perfect report is coming at the expense of justice".

The committee has previously said it is essential the review is concluded and published as soon as possible.

Dobbs declined to comment.

Lloyds has said that the progress of the "independent investigation is a matter for the review. The group will continue to provide every assistance the review requires in order that it can conclude."

Vistry sells off homes to strengthen its finances

Tom Howard Property Correspondent

Vistry has sold dozens of homes that were acquired in part-exchange deals for £15 million, in its latest move to bolster its balance sheet.

Britain's second-biggest housebuilder offloaded the 68 homes, spread around the country, to a company called Spring, which offers rapid transactions but typically only pays about 85 per cent of a property's market value.

"This transaction provides a clear route to unlocking value from a large and diverse portfolio, while simplifying our operational position," Michael Stirrop, Vistry's chief commercial officer, said.

"Partnering with a specialist like Spring enables us to move decisively at scale, reducing complexity and creating greater flexibility in how we deploy capital across the business. It is a practical example of how we are evolving our approach to support both near-term delivery and longer-term growth."

Vistry, which owns the Bovis Homes and Linden Homes brands, has promised shareholders that it will be a "capital-light" business, but it still has about £800 million of net debt.

Adam Daniels, the new chief executive, has prioritised strengthening the balance sheet and reducing the company's debt pile. He has clamped down on costs by running a "voluntary exit scheme" among the 4,500-strong workforce and has sought to bring in extra cash by cutting asking prices by an average of 7 per cent in an effort to get rid of "slower-moving stock".

Housebuilders have increasingly used incentives such as part exchange in recent years to drive sales in what remains a slow market. For prospective customers, part-exchange can be appealing because it takes out the time and risk of having to sell their current home before moving into a new one.

Vistry's annual report showed that at the end of December it had £39.5 million worth of part-exchange properties on its balance sheet. For Spring, this was its first "bulk" deal with one of the major housebuilders. It will now either rent out the properties or sell them on, hopefully for more than what it paid.

Shane Miller-Bourke, co-chief executive of Spring, said that the company's offering "provides vital liquidity and certainty into an area of the market that can otherwise tie up capital for extended periods".

Shares in Vistry, which have more than halved in value so far this year amid a broader slowdown across the property market, closed up 1¼p, or 0.4 per cent, to 284½p.

Mehreen Khan

If Trump bans Chinese AI, it could end up backfiring on America

Kevin Warsh, the new chairman of the US Federal Reserve, will make his second appearance as the world's most powerful financial policymaker tomorrow after the Fed's latest interest rate decision.

Warsh won't like the fact I'm mentioning it. He doesn't want journalists, investors or most Americans to expect him to say anything of note about the direction of US monetary policy. He wants his press conferences to be brief, boring and, it seems, far less frequent. Warsh has hired Lord King of Lothbury, a former governor of the Bank of England, to advise him on how the central bank "conveys policy deliberations and decisions". It's almost certain to conclude that Warsh should talk far less than his predecessors.

Despite his attempts at being very uninteresting on US monetary policy, Warsh is an outspoken champion of the transformative potential of artificial intelligence for the US economy. Before becoming President Trump's choice to lead the Fed, Warsh staked his name on being an AI bull. His reasoning is rooted in a version of American exceptionalism. Warsh told journalists last month that "AI is shorthand perhaps for American ingenuity. My conviction ... is the United States is a winner as we go down this [path]."

Now, most of Warsh's fellow central bankers are also trying to model what AI means for inflation, the jobs market, and how soaring valuations for a handful of US tech companies affect global financial stability.

Warsh's calculation is different. His bullishness is rooted in a jingoistic vision of the world, where American firms are unchallenged innovators creating "formidable advantages" for the US economy. He thinks US hyperscaler firms will serve the world's insatiable demand for America's leading AI models, making their shareholders money and transforming the federal government's finances. The US is a "pacing superpower" in AI "and is best positioned for sustained increases in economic growth over time," he wrote in The Wall Street Journal last year. "The strength of America's tech companies, reflected in market capitalisations that dwarf their overseas peers, gives the US formidable advantages. These so-called hyperscalers aren't the source of America's strength. They are the result."

Warsh's outlook is unusually categorical for a central banker, but not uncommon in Washington. It is a world view that is coming under severe challenge from China. In the intervening six weeks between Warsh's two press conferences, China's Moonshot AI has shocked the AI world with the release of its Kimi K3 model, which is on a par with the cutting-edge performance of models from Anthropic and OpenAI. China's technologists are producing models close to the "frontier" of AI innovation at a fraction of the cost and without access to the world's leading chips, which the US has banned them from accessing.

Warsh and his fellow American exceptionalists see AI as a zero-sum tech race that the US will, and has to, win. They've persisted in this view despite the "DeepSeek moment" of January 2025, when a relatively unknown Chinese firm released a large language model that was comparable to OpenAI's ChatGPT. The DeepSeek shock wiped $600 billion off the value of the chipmaker Nvidia in a single day. Kimi K3 has erased $890 million from the stock valuation of the "Magnificent Seven" tech giants in the last ten days.

China's breakneck catch-up in AI has opened another front in the battle between the world's economic superpowers. Beijing extols the need for open, accessible and cheap AI for the rest of the world to use and develop, while the US wants to cultivate a handful of monopolist firms who are spending vast amounts of money to create and entrench a technological advantage.

These firms need the world to pay a lot of money to access their technologies and generate returns on their investment. Trump has gone further and banned foreigners from accessing leading-edge AI, to secure a permanent advantage for American firms and workers. This was the case last month when he barred non-US citizens from using Anthropic's Fable.

Kevin Warsh believes in American exceptionalism

The AI race has reversed the traditional roles of hegemon, in this case the US, and its challenger, China. The dominant superpower is meant to stabilise the international system by providing cheap public goods during times of crisis, as Britain did from the mid-19th century and the US from the mid-20th.

The challenger in turn adopts mercantilist tools like protectionism and weaponised dependencies to claw power and wealth advantages over rivals. Yet in the realm of AI and energy, the US has adopted a mercantilist mindset, while China, in the words of President Xi last week, "is committed to providing international public goods".

Washington's response to the China AI shock will offer the best sign yet of how far it has become a mercantilist power. A White House official has accused China of "lying, cheating and stealing" from the likes of Anthropic. Scott Bessent, the US Treasury secretary, has threatened sanctions on Chinese AI.

Trump and Xi are due to meet in late September. A wholesale US ban on Chinese AI would have major repercussions for the US's superpower status, its reserve currency and the "formidable advantages" that Warsh is banking on for the economy.

If American firms have to pay more to access closed, expensive knowledge technologies compared with the rest of the world, it will not bring the permanent productivity advantages that Warsh thinks will deliver a new age of low inflation and interest rates.

If US AI firms, whose wild investment has been based on selling to international customers, are cut off from global markets, their current valuations are worthless.

And without the huge exports of its AI services, the US's budget and current account deficit will deteriorate in turn. Rather than ushering in a new era of American exceptionalism, AI could accelerate the era of US decline.

Mehreen Khan is Economics Editor of The Times

Roland Carter

With the right support, Britain can lead the next industrial era

Many organisations have a proud past, but heritage isn't the future. As chief executive of a company that turns 175 this year, I am acutely conscious of the imperative to be a force for innovation, prosperity and opportunity.

The year in which Smiths was founded, 1851, also saw London host the Great Exhibition. It isn't the fact that the UK led the world in engineering at that point that we need to learn from. It is the reaction that it created in Germany and the US, to learn from Britain. They did not sit still; they did not wait and accept their fate.

Today, we are at a point where the UK has an opportunity to refocus and once more become a leader in industrial technology. This is the time to listen to our industrial leaders and support them.

Even now, UK industrials produce the critical components, systems and materials that underpin global supply chains. These efforts create high-quality domestic jobs, drive up exports and contribute to economic growth. Strengthening these foundations is essential for growth and national resilience.

UK engineering companies are quiet global leaders in their fields, investing in modern manufacturing, building partnerships that reinforce our industrial ecosystem, and ensuring roles critical to national and economic security are based in-market.

So we have strong foundations to work on. But there is a real danger this opportunity will be missed without clear partnership between government and business and, critically, a resetting of the narrative around engineering as a career.

Talent is what sits at the core of our ability to innovate. Britain has a proud tradition of engineering and technical education, but the acknowledgment of its value has diminished. And with nearly one million young people not in work or education, we must address the talent shortage in engineering.

Businesses have an important role to play and I am proud of our own significant investment here. But we need support.

The UK must create more opportunities for high-quality post-secondary education and vocational training — and this must take place in technical colleges and universities now that we have lost the very important educational layer that were polytechnics. We also need meaningful career and technical education in secondary schools.

Britain must renew its commitment to Stem education, particularly as we challenge outdated perceptions of industrials as part of the "old economy". We are enablers of the modern economy, providing high-quality jobs and economic growth. Our continued leadership depends on relentless innovation and the adoption of new technologies, and we need talented people to be part of this journey.

My journey reflects what's possible. I have spent my entire career at Smiths, joining after being sponsored at university over 35 years ago. That changed my life and hopefully many other people's. Now, as chief executive, it's my duty to ensure that the next generation has those same opportunities. I have worked in many of the countries that outperform Britain. I know we can outperform them with the correct policies, courage and perseverance.

When industrial technology is supported and scaled, and when government creates an environment where engineering companies can invest confidently, we see a powerful multiplier effect. Investment drives jobs, which drive wages and spending. Growth raises living standards and attracts talent, and that fuels further innovation, investment and economic expansion.

This is within our grasp. I strongly believe the UK has a unique opportunity to lead the next industrial era. It requires ambition and partnership with industry, educators and politicians creating a long-term unity of purpose that transcends short-termism and the lack of confidence we currently see.

Economic strength isn't built in election cycles and soundbites, but by taking a longer-term view. With the right cross-party focus the UK can, and stands ready to, remain one of the world's top-tier engineering nations.

Roland Carter is the chief executive of Smiths, the FTSE 100 industrial engineering company

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Soriot remains confident of meeting $80bn sales target

Alex Ralph
Chief Business Correspondent

The longstanding chief executive of AstraZeneca is “absolutely confident” of hitting a headline $80 billion sales target for 2030 but said the company must operate at “Chinese speed” to continue innovating in the years ahead.

In a reassuring half-year results update after investor concerns about the recent failure of a blockbuster heart disease drug, Sir Pascal Soriot, who has led the Cambridge-based FTSE 100 pharmaceutical group since 2012, said the key “risk-adjusted” target “assumes successes and setbacks” along the way.

“We remain confident in the strength of our pipeline and have more than 20 high-value readouts due over the next 18 months,” he added.

The comments from Soriot, 67, come after the surprise failure this month of a late-stage trial of Wainua, for which AstraZeneca had been targeting more than $5 billion in peak-year sales.

The Wainua news had dented investor confidence and hit the company’s share price. However, yesterday AstraZeneca confirmed its full-year guidance for total revenue to increase by a mid-to-high single-digit percentage and for core earnings per share, its preferred measure of profit, to increase by a low double-digit percentage.

The update was given alongside half-year results showing total revenue up by 6 per cent to $30.67 billion at constant exchange rates.

Revenue for the second quarter was $15.38 billion, an increase of 5 per cent, against City forecasts for $15.39 billion, while core earnings rose 18 per cent to $2.63 per share, compared with forecasts of $2.48.

Double-digit growth in oncology, which represented 46 per cent of group half-year sales, and rare diseases treatments offset headwinds from the diabetes drug Farxiga — AstraZeneca’s most lucrative drug, which generated $4 billion during the period — losing exclusivity in the US, its largest market, and procurement changes in China.

The half-year results were issued alongside mixed late-stage clinical trial updates.

A phase III trial for sonesitatug vedotin, a potential $3 billion-plus drug, in patients with gastric cancers showed positive high-level results. But a separate phase III study showed Ultomiris, an existing drug, did not meet its main target for treating patients with a rare disorder that occurs after a procedure to treat some cancers.

Shares in AstraZeneca closed up by 218p, or 1.7 per cent, at £128.88 on the London Stock Exchange yesterday, valuing the company at close to £200 billion. The shares had fallen 11 per cent since the negative readout for Wainua on July 9, the stock’s worst day in more than two years.

The surprise failure of Wainua has raised pressure on the impending results of two other potential blockbusters in phase III trials, which are deemed “more risky” in the City and Wall Street.

It also raised longer-term investor questions over whether AstraZeneca

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Amazon eyes 5,000 phone satellites in Starlink rivalry

Emma Powell Media and Telecoms Editor

Amazon has stepped up its challenge to Elon Musk’s Starlink, with plans to launch more than 5,000 satellites that would allow it to provide mobile phone services around the world.

The US technology giant, led by Jeff Bezos, has applied to the Federal Communications Commission to launch 5,105 satellites by 2028. The constellation will deliver voice, messaging and data services to users, the company said.

The satellites would be distributed across five “orbital shells”, ranging from between 510km (316 miles) and 580km (360 miles) above the Earth’s surface, which would provide “dense coverage across heavily populated regions” and “extend service toward polar areas”, the company said.

Low-Earth-orbit satellites offer faster connectivity and lower lags than satellites operating in higher orbit, which is vital for effective combat communications, as well as on aeroplanes and ships.

In April Amazon agreed a merger with Globalstar, which is based in Louisiana. Globalstar is known for its low-Earth-orbit communication satellites and offers voice, data and asset-tracking services across enterprise, government and consumer markets.

The Amazon Leo network, formerly known as Project Kuiper, has been beset by delays and has about 375 satellites in orbit, dwarfed by the constellation of more than 10,000 satellites operated by SpaceX, the Starlink owner. Musk’s low-Earth-orbit constellation has signed deals with operators including Deutsche Telekom and Virgin Media O2 to offer satellite-enabled smartphone services.

Vodafone has also launched its own joint venture with AST Space Mobile, a Texas-based satellite designer, called Satellite Connect Europe.

ALAMY

Sir Pascal Soriot sought to reassure investors that AstraZeneca is in good health despite the setback with its Wainua drug

will hit its headline $80 billion 2030 group sales target, set at its Cambridge investor event in May 2024.

Under Soriot, who defended AstraZeneca from a £69 billion takeover attempt by Pfizer in 2014, it has become viewed by investors as the "premium R&D franchise" and built a reputation for rarely posting negative trial results.

It has helped to turn the company into one of the two most valuable businesses on the London stock market, alongside HSBC. The transformation has been boosted by growth in China, AstraZeneca's second-largest market, where Soriot has overseen multibillion-dollar investments and partnerships with biotech companies.

The speed of innovation among Chinese companies, which do not yet have the scale to commercialise globally, meant AstraZeneca had to collaborate with them, Soriot said.

However, he cautioned that it also had to "learn to compete" with them as they expand internationally, to avoid the decline of other industries such as European carmakers.

"You can look at other industries that haven't maybe reacted as fast as they should have to the emergence of Chinese innovation — and we don't want to fall into the same trap," he said.

AstraZeneca is also investing in utilising AI for drug discovery and development. Soriot said he did not believe the technology would "kill jobs" in the pharma industry but instead make it "faster and smarter".

'We'll fail from time to time'

Behind the story

With about £25 billion having been lost from AstraZeneca's market valuation since the surprise failure of Wainua this month, the City and Wall Street were looking for reassurance (Alex Ralph writes).

Yesterday, in a 55-minute media presentation and Q&A alongside the company's first-half results — the first update since the trial setback for the heart disease drug — Sir Pascal Soriot tried to quash concerns over whether it could still hit its $80 billion sales target and overcome a "patent cliff" for its existing blockbuster cancer drugs in the early 2030s.

"I have never been more confident in ... our ability to achieve our ambitious 2030 target," he said.

The failure of Wainua, or eplontersen, in a phase III trial for patients with transthyretin amyloid cardiomyopathy, a type of heart disease, was a reminder that "transformative science carries inherent risk and that not every programme will succeed".

Soriot added: "Biology is not mathematics. It's not as predictable. Biology doesn't always behave the way you expect it would."

Part of the disappointment stems from AstraZeneca's phase III success rate — 85 to 90 per cent — in the past couple of years, compared with the industry average of 60 to 65 per cent.

"People have got used to us delivering at a high success rate. But we have to accept we will fail from time to time," Soriot said.

Wainua's failure was also a reminder, he said, of the necessity of "very large" capital investments in R&D programmes.

AstraZeneca's investments meant it had the "largest phase III pipeline in the industry", with more than 20 "high-value" trials expected to deliver results in the next 18 months. And it is targeting the launch of 20 new molecular entities (NMEs).

"We are already more than halfway toward that goal, with 11 already launched," Soriot said.

On a risk-adjusted basis, "assuming both successes and setbacks", it means AstraZeneca believes it is on course to reach its 2030 sales target.

But Soriot is also looking beyond the end of the decade, and building a company to grow through the patent expiries in the early 2030s of existing blockbuster cancer drugs Tagrisso, Calquence and Imfinzi, a $20 billion-plus sales headwind and a quarter of the company's portfolio.

The NMEs include 12 that AstraZeneca believes can generate more than $5 billion in peak-year sales. Among these are tozorakimab for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which delivered positive late-stage trial results in March.

And there are another five — including sonesitatug vedotin (Sone-Ve), which showed positive high-level phase III results in patients with gastric cancers — that are each expected to generate between $3 billion and $5 billion.

Sone-Ve is the first pivotal readout from AstraZeneca's wholly-owned portfolio of antibody drug conjugates (ADCs), a new class of cancer drugs that hunt down cancer cells to deliver chemotherapy directly into the tumour.

ADCs are among new "transformative technologies", along with immuno-oncology drugs, cell therapies and weight management drugs, that set AstraZeneca up to "grow well into the next decade", Soriot said. "We have the science, we have the pipeline and we have the team to make this happen."

The 43-slide presentation by Soriot helped to soothe investors and analysts. The group's shares had fallen 11 per cent since the negative readout for Wainua on July 9. But yesterday they closed up 1.7 per cent.

Shore Capital told clients: "We continue to see the delivery of a high-quality, diversified growth story, underpinned by its broad blockbuster base and an enviable pipeline."

Porsche to axe an extra 5,000 workers

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

Porsche is to axe more than 9,000 jobs by 2035 after the German car company reached an agreement with its trade unions.

The cuts mean that about one in five of Porsche's current workforce will lose their jobs over the next nine years.

The restructuring is the latest shake-up to hit the Germany automotive industry. Porsche had already agreed 4,400 job cuts with workers' representatives over the past 18 months, and it will now cut a further 5,000 jobs on top of that. Volkswagen, the parent company of Porsche, is seeking up to 100,000 redundancies.

Volkswagen is Europe's largest car maker and is also behind brands such as Audi, Lamborghini, Bentley, Cupra, Skoda and Seat. It is the second biggest in the world after Toyota. Through complex cross-shareholdings the Porsche-Piëch families have control of voting shares in the Volkswagen group.

Porsche has been hit by problems amid the transition to electric cars

Porsche, like Volkswagen, is hurting because of a collapse in sales in China as motorists there turn to domestic brands, President Trump's trade tariffs on exports to the US and a series of missteps in the electric transition, in which many drivers of luxury vehicles have turned their backs on zero-emission alternatives.

The job cuts have been ordered by Michael Leiters, Porsche's chief executive since the turn of the year. A Porsche veteran, Leiters has also been boss of McLaren, the British supercar company. At Porsche he replaced Oliver Blume, now chief executive of Volkswagen, after investors fretted that Blume would not be able to oversee the turnaround of both companies.

Blume has yet to force through his job cuts and factory closure programme at Volkswagen.

After an agreement with workers and Porsche's supervisory board over his new "future package" strategy, Leiters had said: "The future package is good for Porsche. It gives us the opportunity to strategically realign our company and invest in our competitiveness."

Industry analysts have long wondered how Porsche had lost its way. The retirement of popular models such as the Boxster and Cayman coincided with a push for the all-electric Taycan, a vehicle nearing an entry-level price tag of £100,000. This car has had multiple problems and is positioned in a part of the market from which even Tesla, the electric car leader, has withdrawn.

Paramount boss expects Warner takeover to close

Emma Powell

The boss of Paramount Skydance has insisted that he remains "highly confident" its planned $110 billion takeover of Warner Bros Discovery will still go ahead, despite the deal being on pause.

David Ellison, the son of Larry Ellison, the billionaire co-founder of Oracle, wrote an email to employees in which he accepted that reports of delays and court proceedings "can create questions and uncertainty".

Ellison, 43, claimed that regulatory bodies in 65 jurisdictions, including the European Union, the US and China, have cleared the deal and that it would have closed "in the coming weeks" had it not been for two lawsuits filed by 12 US states and the Writers Guild of America trade union.

Both have argued that a Paramount-Warner Bros merger, which would combine two major Hollywood studios, two streaming services and two large cable-TV operators, would stifle competition and lead to consumers paying higher prices. The union was also worried about the impact on writers and film crews.

Paramount believes that a combination with Warner Bros would benefit viewers and has vowed to release 30 films in cinemas every year, double their current output.

It has also argued that the increased scale would allow it to better compete "in a rapidly changing entertainment landscape" that is now dominated by the likes of Netflix and Disney.

After a protracted bidding war, Larry Ellison, an ally of President Trump, secured a deal to buy Warner in February, at the same time thwarting a rival bid from Netflix.

He has given a personal guarantee of $40.4 billion to backstop Paramount's bid for Warner Bros.

Business

The Times unit trust information service

ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS

Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	129.74		+0.65	8.12
UK Equity A ‡	391.23		+4.52	4.03
UK Growth ‡	10018.96		+112.99	2.31

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS

0800 092 2051

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	370.95		+2.38	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	211.88		+1.36	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	226.14		+0.84	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	67.57		+0.15	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	809.98		+10.73	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	310.45		+4.11	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	91.1		+0.15	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	876.8		+9.07	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	677.49		+5.63	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4272.35		+30.14	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	95.43		-0.52	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	115.72		+0.38	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.32		+0.18	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	115.51		+0.37	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.41		+0.17	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1321.4		+22.51	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2292.11		+33.20	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1086.39		+15.71	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT

Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Health ‡	3345		+43.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2125		+36.00	1.15
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	323.9		+2.70	0.38
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	235.6		+4.20	1.15

AXA FUND MANAGERS

Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS

08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	293.00		...	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡@	1029		+1.58	1.48
UK Growth ‡	881.50		...	1.71
UK Income ‡@	257.50		...	3.92

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT

Dealing 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	5475.66		...	0.62

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS

Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083

Share Class 1-Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1607		+22	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	592.2		+7	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	392.8		+2.5	...
Strategic Bd ‡	227.3		+0.6	4.00

EDENTREE INV MGMT

0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡@	482.7		+8.40	1.80
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡	449		+3.30	0.55
Sust Mgd Income ‡	141.9		+1.40	4.73
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	84.95		+0.33	4.99
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡@	255.4		+2.80	1.65
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	321.4		+5.50	1.45

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL

Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2921		...	...
American ‡	7835		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	732.5		...	0.49
European ‡	4356		...	0.78
Global Focus ‡	3640		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.37		...	6.58
Global Special Sits ‡	8778		...	...
Japan ‡	981.8		...	0.34
Moneyblder Bal ‡	48.47		...	0.61
Moneyblder Inc ‡	28.17		...	5.31
Moneyblder UK Ind ‡	200.33		...	2.50
Special Sits ‡	7370		...	1.68
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	104.1		...	1.45

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS

01296 386 386

Authorised Inv Funds

Share Class C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.24		...	4.50
Intl Gwth ‡	212.4		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	107.6		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	119.3		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)

Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6

HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1591		+2	0.79
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1839		+27	2.31
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1065		+15	2.36
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	438.4		+5.2	2.51
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	178.0		+2.2	2.66
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	397.7		+4.1	2.95
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	215.6		+2.2	2.94
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1101		+13	2.68
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	495.3		+5.9	2.82
Japan Ind Acc ‡	230.2		+3.6	1.47
Japan Ind Inc ‡	167.0		+2.5	1.51
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1046		+6	1.58
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	591.7		+3.3	1.61

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	310.8		+1.1	4.30
Income Acc ‡	1062		...	3.28
Income Inc ‡@	398.8		+3.2	3.34
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	223.0		+1.9	3.01
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	86.44		+0.73	3.08

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1226		+2	0.78

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD

Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677

Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121

Invesco Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	231.11		...	4.02
High Income Dis ‡	430.13		...	3.17
Income & Growth Dis ‡	504.7		...	3.14
Income Inc ‡	1653.39		...	2.89
Money Acc ‡	107.67		...	3.62
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92.72		...	5.76
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1380.87		...	1.48
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1328.71		...	1.46

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD

Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900

OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	820		+10.24	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	467.69		+2.82	2.64
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	267.85		+1.67	2.50
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	324.83		+2.79	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	119.5		+1.02	0.97
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	374.64		+0.83	3.80
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.8		+0.15	5.20
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡	143.78		+0.67	5.99
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	66.61		+0.31	7.70
Emerging Mkts Equity A Ac ‡	289.11		+2.63	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1208.3		+11.48	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	295.61		+4.79	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	392.56		+7.58	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2074.36		+30.34	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	490.12		+12.77	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	512.25		+11.65	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	392.98		+8.93	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2655.87		+57.88	1.06
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	913.38		+19.91	1.07

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS

Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	113.2		...	4.40
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	99.81		...	5.40
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	356.6		...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	154.5		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1315		...	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	298.2		...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3236		...	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.05		...	6.10
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6415		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	86.4		...	2.40
Global Tech A Acc ‡	6951		...	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	178.3194		...	2.20
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	186.4		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	330.7		+2.2	1.70
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	160.3		...	2.70
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	229.6		...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	228.8		...	4.40
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.27		...	4.40
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.19		...	5.80
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	207.2		...	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	196.8		...	1.30
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	2893		...	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT

OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	705.8000		+8.3000	2.51

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD

020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	122.32		+0.7714	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	591.38		+1.7349	0.71
European ‡	3935.47		+1.7497	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1335.98		+1.7350	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	427.71		+0.7319	3.39
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	337.8		+0.8642	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	812		+0.8825	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	463.74		+0.2872	3.47
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	595.86		+1.2185	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	286.31		+1.4529	1.75
UK Growth ‡	280.44		+2.0059	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1006.15		+0.8927	4.58

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	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡	804.2000		+1150.0000	200.00
Euro Ind Inc ‡	490.3000		+710.0000	200.00
Fixed Int Acc ‡@	149.7000		+60.0000	460.00
Fixed Int Dist ‡@	61.8800		+27.0000	460.00
Global Health ‡	123.3		+1.1	1.00
Glob Tech Acc ‡	229.3		+1.1	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	153.2000		...	580.00
Japan Ind Acc ‡	110.6000		+150.0000	130.00
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	412.4000		+340.0000	140.00
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	534.5000		+640.0000	250.00
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	231.4000		+270.0000	250.00
US Ind Acc ‡@	1392		+10	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	466.7000		+350.0000	100.00

M&G SECURITIES

Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1911.96		+0.6310625957	5.02

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	828.23		+0.5487368127	5.09
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	66.93		+0.465325728	4.39
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.78		+0.1006542526	6.25
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	101.1		+0.3374354903	1.57
Index Trckr Inc ‡	103.82		+1.1890838207	3.03
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.28		+0.1188118812	4.27
UK Select A Inc ‡	3262.94		+2.0013004389	2.68

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.71		+0.4298434142	5.04
Dividend Inc ‡	66.57		+0.6045035515	5.37
Recovery A Inc ‡	140.27		+0.7180297264	2.89
Sml Cos Inc ‡	357.99		+1.0044296476	2.86

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡	162.24		+0.7201390613	3.90

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST

0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	87.71		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	294.9		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	704.7		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	317		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	474.6		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1085.7		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡@	1320		...	0.80
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡@	734.5		...	0.80

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT

Enquiries: 0800 0961 962

The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)

Class A Shares

Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1064.48		...	4.48
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1677.08		...	4.45
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1125.49		...	4.57
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	13613.71		...	0.34
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1559		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1661.77		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3661.64		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1470.44		...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1446.98		...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1487.11		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1465.39		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1502.72		...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	144.07		...	4.77
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	98.1		...	4.79
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1375.88		...	4.72
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3047.96		...	4.62
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2382.23		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1412.89		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2508.55		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1463.01		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS

08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	239.8		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	645.1		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	309.7		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD

0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1354.8000	1429.8700	+13.44	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7000	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS

0845 300 2244

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

Tracker & Special Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	595.5		+5.10	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	271.0		+2.30	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	327.7		+1.70	4.00
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	107.9		+0.60	4.00
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	465.2		+4.20	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	298.0		+2.10	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.59		+0.50	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡@	553.7		+4.60	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡@	149.9		+1.30	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	228.1		+0.80	4.50
Strat In A Inc ‡@	86.27		+0.31	4.50
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	133.9		+1.20	2.50

OEIC B Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	659.7		+5.60	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	269.5		+2.30	2.60

OEIC C Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	130.7		+1.10	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS

0845 279 3003

Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.2		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	50.97		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.3		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	287.6		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	199.6		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	263.1		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	185.3		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	47.96		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	543.2		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	252.6		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	807.8		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS

Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	183.2		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	155.06		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	132.25		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	104.61		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	486.73		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	425.85		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	481.66		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	314.89		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS

Client Serv: 0800 0684000

Retail Shares Class 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.4021		+0.77	4.65
Threadneedle Mnthly Etr Inc Inc ‡	100.5276		+99.82	2.77
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	54.6846		+23.3	4.30
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	54.5898		+23.11	3.97
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.4546		+18.9	4.18
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.8094		+12.39	3.82
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	118.3796		+139.76	3.54
Threadneedle UK Growth & inc Rtl Inc ‡	111.759		+175.43	3.24
Threadneedle UK Istl Rtl ‡	246.8698		+304.73	1.36
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	88.622		+99.41	3.05
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	163.9611		+226.64	1.35
Theadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	398.1268		+321.86	0.39

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LTD

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis	986.6	986.6	...	1.24

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.68	Tr IL 0 ½% 50	64.28	+ .27	0.78	2.51
66.33	57.06	Tr IL 0 ¼% 52	57.49	+ .23	0.43	2.51
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99.25	– .20	0.13	0.50
100.99	97.18	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98.18	– .21	0.13	0.82
98.49	94.73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	95.53	– .14	0.13	1.04
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83.41	– .01	0.15	1.90
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77.41	+ .05	0.16	2.18
79.32	72.13	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	72.81	+ .10	0.17	2.27
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	67.06	+ .11	0.19	2.43
71.23	63.10	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	63.50	+ .16	0.20	2.48
68.00	59.30	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	59.89	+ .20	0.21	2.50
60.61	50.05	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	50.58	+ .29	0.25	2.44
58.90	48.89	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	49.52	+ .27	0.25	2.42
54.25	43.57	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	44.17	+ .27	0.28	2.28
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	43.06	+ .27	0.29	2.23
57.66	42.98	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	44.36	+ .29	0.28	1.94
97.88	93.44	Tr IL 0 ¾% 34	93.75	– .08	0.80	1.62
79.12	71.03	Tr IL 0 ¾% 47	71.52	+ .20	1.05	2.48
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 62	52.23	+ .27	0.72	2.37
87.38	80.91	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 40	81.16	+ .07	0.77	2.23
84.28	76.46	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 42	76.88	+ .10	0.81	2.34
104.16	100.99	Tr IL 1 ¼% 27	101.06	– .15	1.24	0.44
103.67	99.41	Tr IL 1 ¼% 32	99.62	– .12	1.25	1.31
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 ¼% 54	74.93	+ .36	1.67	2.49
85.60	73.36	Tr IL 1 ¼% 55	74.51	+ .35	1.68	2.48
99.52	94.22	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 35	94.46	– .01	1.19	1.78
97.09	90.94	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 37	91.13	+ nc	1.23	2.00
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 ¾% 38	96.46	+ .09	1.81	2.08
99.42	88.52	Tr IL 1 ⅞% 49	89.45	+ .34	2.10	2.48
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	240.52	– .20	0.83	1.75
349.35	338.41	Tr IL 4 ⅛% 30	340.83	– .77	1.21	0.94

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	22.31	Tr 0 ½% 61	23.13	+ .17	2.16	5.40
65.04	55.58	Tr 0 ⅛% 51	56.34	+ .21	0.22	2.51
38.39	32.78	Tr 0 ⅝% 50	33.98	+ .26	1.84	5.67
47.60	40.99	Tr 1 ½% 53	42.23	+ .29	3.55	5.73
45.88	39.62	Tr 1 ¼% 51	40.92	+ .27	3.05	5.72
33.04	27.53	Tr 1 ⅛% 73	28.32	+ .22	3.97	5.24
48.44	41.88	Tr 1 ¾% 57	43.05	+ .32	4.07	5.68
48.36	41.73	Tr 1 ⅝% 54	43.12	+ .31	3.77	5.70
41.45	35.65	Tr 1 ⅝% 71	36.64	+ .25	4.44	5.37
57.14	49.76	Tr 2 ½% 65	51.18	+ .36	4.88	5.59
74.02	64.55	Tr 3 ½% 68	66.49	+ .46	5.26	5.57
81.50	72.00	Tr 3 ¾% 52	73.99	+ .43	5.07	5.68
80.90	71.30	Tr 3 ¾% 53	73.13	+ .44	5.13	5.71
88.15	77.58	Tr 4 ¼% 55	79.67	+ .48	5.33	5.68
83.52	73.44	Tr 4% 60	75.34	+ .46	5.31	5.65

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 ¼% 31	81.21	+ .18	0.31	4.48
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 ⅜% 30	84.46	+ .15	0.44	4.44
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 ⅝% 35	68.84	+ .25	0.91	4.96
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 ⅞% 33	77.00	+ .24	1.14	4.78
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	44.17	+ .27	1.98	5.62
54.44	47.82	Tr 1 ½% 47	49.26	+ .26	3.05	5.66
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	57.33	+ .33	2.18	5.39
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 ⅛% 39	62.63	+ .31	1.80	5.23
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	71.60	+ .32	2.44	5.14
55.77	49.19	Tr 1 ¾% 49	50.53	+ .29	3.46	5.67
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.58	+ .20	1.21	4.62
82.54	74.42	Tr 3 ½% 45	76.16	+ .42	4.60	5.58
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	91.89	+ .24	3.54	4.71
80.41	72.57	Tr 3 ¼% 44	74.34	+ .39	4.37	5.56
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	87.56	+ .37	4.28	5.20
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 ½% 34	97.70	+ .31	4.61	4.85
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 ½% 35	97.05	+ .33	4.64	4.92
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 ½% 42	89.53	+ .42	5.03	5.48
102.33	97.08	Tr 4 ¼% 32	98.23	+ .22	4.33	4.60
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 ¼% 34	96.01	+ .30	4.43	4.86
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	94.24	+ .33	4.51	5.01
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 ¼% 39	90.27	+ .40	4.71	5.29
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	88.95	+ .42	4.78	5.36
90.97	81.54	Tr 4 ¼% 46	83.62	+ .46	5.08	5.61
89.58	79.95	Tr 4 ¼% 49	82.00	+ .45	5.18	5.65
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 ⅛% 31	98.24	+ .18	4.20	4.55
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 ⅛% 33	96.63	+ .24	4.27	4.72
104.72	100.54	Tr 4 ¾% 30	101.17	+ .18	4.70	4.45
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 ¾% 35	98.26	+ .33	4.83	4.99
102.00	93.84	Tr 4 ¾% 38	95.68	+ .41	4.96	5.23
102.58	98.98	Tr 4 ⅜% 30	99.60	+ .15	4.39	4.50
97.07	89.07	Tr 4 ⅜% 40	90.91	+ .41	4.81	5.33
100.00	94.52	Tr 4 ⅝% 37	96.02	+ .35	4.82	5.12
100.99	96.96	Tr 4 ⅞% 36	98.57	+ .35	4.95	5.06
105.68	96.52	Tr 5 ¼% 41	98.69	+ .45	5.32	5.38
105.44	93.20	Tr 5 ⅜% 56	95.59	+ .54	5.62	5.69

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.05	Tr 0 ½% 29	90.97	+ .10	0.55	4.34
98.67	91.45	Tr 0 ⅛% 28	94.19	+ .07	0.13	4.14
99.37	96.09	Tr 0 ⅜% 26	99.24	– ...	0.38	3.63
91.00	87.88	Tr 0 ⅞% 29	89.43	+ .11	0.98	4.42
97.28	95.29	Tr 1 ¼% 27	97.19	+ .03	1.29	4.24
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 ⅝% 28	94.31	+ .09	1.72	4.32
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.78	+ .12	4.05	4.47
101.41	99.44	Tr 4 ¼% 27	100.00	+ .04	4.25	4.24
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 ⅛ % 29	99.07	+ .12	4.16	4.46
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	100.01	– .01	4.12	4.07
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 ⅜% 28	100.01	+ .07	4.37	4.37
107.53	103.38	Tr 6% 28	103.81	+ .08	5.78	4.28

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

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Vodafone raises profit guidance after stronger growth in Africa

Emma Powell Media and Telecoms Editor

Vodafone has raised its profits guidance for the year, in the telecoms giant's first results since the French billionaire Xavier Niel became its largest shareholder.

The London-listed group said that adjusted earnings before interest, taxes and other items would be at the top end of its guidance range of between €13 billion and €13.3 billion, while adjusted free cashflow was set to be at the upper end of €2.6 billion to €2.9 billion, largely due to a stronger performance from its African operations.

The Niel family's Vega investment vehicle said it would be taking a 16 per cent stake in Vodafone, since increased to almost 19 per cent, after buying out e&, the Emirati telecoms operator.

Niel, 58, who is the founder and owner of the French telecoms company Iliad, said at the time that Vega was "ready to contribute our deep sector expertise and operational know-how to its future success ... we have a proven track record of helping businesses to perform better and create substantial shareholder value."

Margherita Della Valle has led a dramatic reshaping of Vodafone since taking charge on a permanent basis in 2023, selling its Italian and Spanish operations and sealing a £16.5 billion merger with CK Hutchison's Three in the UK. Vodafone has since taken full control of VodafoneThree.

However, despite the simplification of the company, it is thought the French dealmaker could push for more aggressive cost cuts.

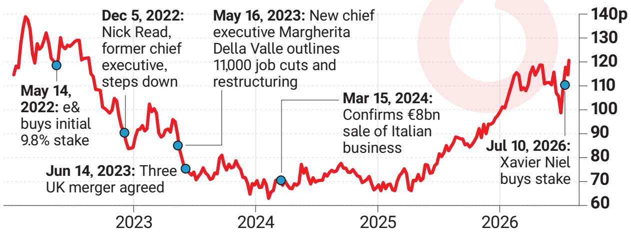
Niel, who made his name as the founder of Iliad in Paris in 1999 just before the dotcom bubble burst, controls an empire of telecoms investments and businesses spanning 26 countries in Europe and Latin America. As an active dealmaker, he has long championed consolidation in Europe's fragmented telecoms industry.

Over the first quarter of this year, Vodafone's organic service revenue, a key performance metric, rose 5.2 per cent, lifted by double-digit growth in Turkey and Africa. Adjusted earnings before interest, taxes and other items rose 6 per cent to €2.9 billion.

JONATHAN HORDLE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Hannah Waddingham, the actress and singer, at the Wimbledon tennis championships, which are sponsored by Vodafone

Vodafone share price



The Safaricom business has been consolidated into the Vodafone accounts after it raised its stake by 20 per cent to 55 per cent in Kenya's largest mobile operator.

Della Valle, 61, said the group had recorded "broad-based growth" over the quarter. The performance was boosted by a stronger recovery in Germany, which has been weighed down by a change in the law to unbundle television cable, broadband and telephone services, as well as broadband and mobile customer losses.

Organic service revenue rose by 1.2 per cent, above a consensus forecast of 0.1 per cent from City analysts, according to Visible Alpha. That was despite a further 85,000 decline in its mobile customer numbers and 98,000 broadband customer losses.

In the UK, organic service revenue rose by 0.6 per cent, better than a consensus forecast of 0.4 per cent by City analysts. VodafoneThree is aiming to shave about £700 million a year from its total costs and capital spending by the 2030 financial year.

It is the second increase in profit guidance in less than a year.

The shares, which have risen 41 per cent over the past 12 months, closed up 5½p, or 4.8 per cent, at 120¼p yesterday.

Wheat deal links crop growers with lab genetics

Richard Tyler
Editor, Entrepreneurs Network

An Oxford University spinout that edits seed genes to boost yields and make crops more drought and disease-resistant has acquired a wheat breeding business and aims to boost production in Britain.

Wild Bioscience is using some of the £45 million in venture capital it raised last October to acquire the Suffolk-based F1 Seed, which was founded in 2014 by Bill Angus. He previously ran the UK's largest wheat-breeding programme for the French firm Limagrain.

Angus, 75, said the deal reconnected lab-based genetic research with growers using the seed, much as the world-renowned Plant Breeding Institute in Cambridge did for 75 years before it was privatised in 1987.

"I am extremely concerned about the lack of interest in food security," he said. "We are importing so much food and we have the potential to grow so much more. We have the best farmers ... let's give them the best genetics."

Angus said the dry weather and spread of diseases such as yellow rust meant wheat growers were "up against it" at the moment.

"The market is dominated by French and German multinationals — all very good companies," he said. "But now this is an opportunity to say to British growers: 'we are working for you.'"

F1 receives royalties from seed companies that grow its varieties. It has field trials in Suffolk for 100,000 new lines, and six wheat varieties on the market for animal feed and distilling, with three more launching this year. Securing a 1 per cent UK market share for any crop is worth about £180,000 in royalty payments, Angus said.

The plan is to combine Wild Bioscience's AI capability with F1's breeding skills to provide wheat varieties direct to UK farmers by 2027.

Ross Hendron, co-founder and chief executive of Wild Bioscience, said: "You have had traditional breeding and biotechnology sitting in their own worlds ... We are based around Oxford and all of the farmers around here can't access any of these sorts of things."

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Dive to red takes shine off Shein

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

The fast-fashion giant Shein posted a loss of nearly $100 million in the first quarter and saw its valuation plummet before a planned listing in Hong Kong.

The group, founded in China, reported a 39 per cent fall in net income to $2.06 billion last year despite an 8 per cent rise in revenue to $41.8 billion.

In the first quarter of the current financial year, Shein swung to a $99 million loss, which it said was "mainly attributable" to a $328 million paper adjustment required by an accounting rule change for special investor shares.

That is according to Shein's prospectus for its stock market debut in Hong Kong, which also showed that its valuation had fallen from $98.2 billion in 2022 to $64 billion in 2024.

The filing, first seen by the BBC, did not offer any details on the size, timetable or pricing of the planned initial public offering.

A Hong Kong listing would mark a significant shift in strategy for Shein after its preferred routes to market failed to get the green light.

Shein initially set its sights on New York before turning to London, as regulatory and political scrutiny in the US intensified.

However, it was unable to secure the necessary approvals from Chinese regulators for a UK float, forcing it to change its plans.

The China Securities Regulatory Commission gave Shein approval for a Hong Kong share sale on July 10.

Shein was founded in 2008 in Nanjing by Sky Xu, initially as a wedding dress retailer called Sheinside.

The company rebranded as Shein in 2015 and has since grown into a huge fast-fashion ecommerce platform, primarily targeting Gen Z consumers with cheap, trendy clothing, which averages about £7.90 per item.

Shein, which once seemed unstoppable, has had a difficult few years. In the US, its biggest market, it has suffered from changes to customs rules.

Washington scrapped a tax exemption allowing packages worth less than $800 to be imported duty-free from China, Canada and Mexico. The rule enables marketplaces like Shein and Temu to send individual packages to customers across borders instead of shipping its goods to countries to be processed domestically.

JADE GAO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The fast-fashion ecommerce retailer Shein is due to list in Hong Kong this year. It has been hit by the removal of a US duty-free exemption for small-value packages

The UK recently announced plans to scrap a similar rule called "de minimis", which means overseas retailers do not have to pay import duties on shipments worth less than £135. However, Rachel Reeves, when she was chancellor, said that she would not scrap it for another few years.

Shein said in the filing: "In response to the increased duties and taxes, we are pursuing a wide range of options, including increasing our prices in the US market to offset a portion of the increased costs."

The company said that the Iran war had hit demand, increased costs and caused delays of deliveries in some markets. Nevertheless, the filing showed customer numbers had still been increasing. Shein had 281 million active customers in the year to the end of March, up from 16 per cent a year earlier.

Shein was contacted for comment.

Return of the mack amid profit rise

Greig Cameron Scottish Business Editor

The luxury raincoat maker Mackintosh has reported a rise in profit even though its revenue dropped.

Annual accounts lodged at Companies House show turnover was £5.3 million for the 12 months to March this year. That was a drop of £1 million from the previous financial year, with the decline largely attributed to a fall in the wholesale market.

The accounts note that sales from physical retail premises — Mackintosh has one shop in London and six in Japan — performed well while full-price products on ecommerce platforms also had a strong year.

The directors said there had been an accumulated high level of stock in certain styles because of the challenges of the wholesale market. They noted that there had been strong interest in new collections from "leading stores in several countries".

Pre-tax profit was £2.1 million, up from £1.7 million, with the business managing to trim administrative expenses and sales costs during the most recent year.

The directors said: "We will continue with the existing strategy of reducing costs, developing wholesale and investing in online sales. Despite significant opportunities in certain markets we have not been able to establish enough brand recognition.

The Mackintosh range has grown to include shoes, hats and bags

"We have begun the process of identifying opportunities to work with a new agent in North America."

The company name is adapted from its founder, Charles Macintosh, a 19th-century Scottish chemist who invented a new method for waterproofing cotton. Macintosh went on to develop rubberised outerwear and from that the Mackintosh coat was born.

It become a household staple as well as being used by the army, police forces and rail workers.

The business has undergone many changes of ownership and was revamped as an upmarket fashion label more than two decades ago.

Yagi Tsusho, the Japanese clothing group, has owned Mackintosh since 2007.

Its range has grown beyond outerwear to include clothing, shoes, hats, bags and other accessories.

It has also collaborated with several other fashion brands including Victoria Beckham, Céline, CP Company, Balenciaga, Maison Margiela and Louis Vuitton.

The original Mackintosh coats are still handmade at a factory in Cumbernauld, North Lanarkshire, and can cost more than £1,000.

Tortilla spices up its new numbers after suspension

Jessica Newman
Leisure Industries Correspondent

Selling burritos and nachos on takeaway delivery platforms has spiced up sales at Tortilla Mexican Grill.

Britain's biggest Mexican restaurant chain, which has about 80 restaurants, said like-for-like sales rose 13.9 per cent in the six months to the end of June, compared with the previous year.

Since listing its products on Just Eat, Deliveroo and Uber Eats in late March, overall like-for-likes have risen by 19.7 per cent, while delivery sales for the period were up 54.1 per cent.

The company said improvements to its menu and the introduction of self-ordering kiosks in 38 restaurants helped to increase how much customers spend on each order.

The update came as Tortilla published its annual results for 2025, which were delayed after accounting issues that meant auditors had to reassess the group's accounts.

In May the company said £2.5 million of spending in its French business was "not expensed through the profit and loss account", meaning its earnings would be up to £2.5 million lower than previous indicated.

Tortilla's newly filed accounts showed revenues of £73.8 million for the year to December 28, an 8.5 per cent increase on the year before, while pre-tax profits were up from £3.3 million in 2024 to £14.7 million.

Brandon Stephens, Tortilla's founder and chief executive, said it was "turning the page on the 2025 financial year and looking to the future".

Shares in Tortilla, which returned to trading yesterday after being suspended as a result of its delayed accounts, were unchanged at 72p.

Robert Stephens Tempus

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Is there still a thirst for Fever-Tree?

FEVER-TREE

Market cap	Annual revenue
£922 million	£325 million

Fever-Tree's share price has slumped by 66 per cent over the past five years. Amid continued high inflation and relatively tight monetary policy across the Aim-quoted beverage firm's key markets, many investors may feel that a share price recovery is highly unlikely.

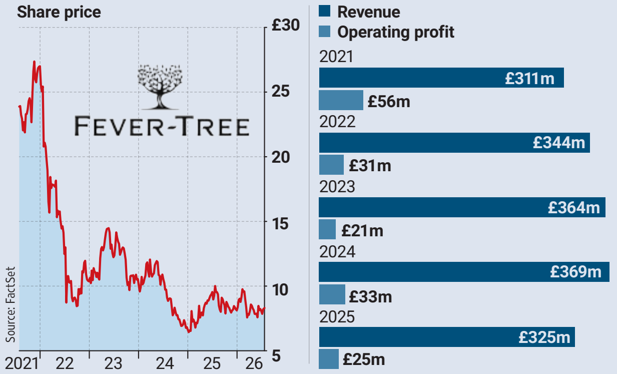
However, the past five years of economic and consumer difficulties are unlikely to be mirrored over the coming years. With the company having a solid balance sheet, a strong competitive position and upbeat financial forecasts, it offers investment appeal on a long-term view.

Founded in 2004, Fever-Tree's first product was Indian tonic water. Since then, it has expanded its range of tonics to include a variety of flavours while diversifying into non-tonic drinks such as ginger beer, lemonade and cola that contribute 45 per cent of its total sales.

Although the UK remains the firm's main market by revenue, accounting for a third of sales last year, Europe and the US are also key markets. They contributed 30 per cent and 25 per cent respectively of total revenue last year.

Clearly, consumers in all three geographies have faced a challenging past five years. In the UK, for example, inflation has been above the Bank of England's 2 per cent target in 56 of the past 60 months, while it has been similarly sticky in the US and Europe. This has contributed to a tough operating environment for the firm, particularly given the typically premium price points of its product range. High inflation has persistently weighed on real-terms wage growth and encouraged consumers to either cut back on discretionary items or trade down to cheaper alternatives.

Long-term appeal



Source: FactSet

ADVICE Buy
WHY An improving operating outlook is set to catalyse the stock's performance

While this trend may persist in the short run, thereby acting as a drag on Fever-Tree's near-term financial and share price performance, it is expected to give way to more sanguine conditions in the long run.

In fact, inflation in the UK is forecast to fall to 2.3 per cent by the end of next year, while both the US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank anticipate a drop to 2 per cent by the end of 2028. This should ease pressure on consumer spending, while boosting the outlook for real-terms wage growth as central banks have greater scope to implement monetary policy easing.

Over time, this is likely to prompt greater demand for the discretionary, premium products on which Fever-Tree is squarely focused. This is evidenced in the firm's financial forecasts, with the company expected to produce an annualised rise in earnings per share (EPS) of 25 per cent over the next two financial years.

Of course, investors are being asked to pay a premium price for such exceptional growth. Even after their aforementioned sharp decline in recent years, for example, the company's shares trade on a price-earnings (P/E) ratio of 34. While this suggests there is little, if any, scope for an upward rerating, the firm's sound fundamentals, alongside its rapid prospective growth rate, mean it is worthy of a premium market valuation.

Fever-Tree's balance sheet, for instance, contains minimal debt, so that it has a net cash position of around £88 million. This provides it with the financial means to overcome an uncertain near-term economic outlook and continue to expand its range of products.

The company also enjoys significant brand loyalty that equates to substantial pricing power. This is likely to support profit margin growth as operating conditions ultimately improve.

Clearly, geopolitical risks including conflict in the Middle East and the ongoing global trade war could yet lead to inflation forecasts that are revised upwards, higher-for-longer interest rates and weaker demand for the firm's products. In this instance, the elevated volatility that has been a feature of the company's shares in recent years, alongside their disappointing performance, could persist for a sustained period.

In the long run, though, Fever-Tree offers investment appeal. It is well placed to benefit from an eventual upturn in its operating environment, given its solid finances and sound competitive position. And while its shares are undoubtedly expensive, they offer good value for money based on the company's upbeat EPS growth forecasts.

Profits dented as supply issues erupt at Vesuvius

MARKET REPORT

Vesuvius's "operational issues" have dragged on longer than bosses had hoped, which is putting a big dent in its profits and its share price (Tom Howard writes).

The company makes ceramic pipes and gate valves to move molten metal during the manufacture of steel.

Vesuvius flagged in May that some of its raw material suppliers had sent a duff batch while there were also teething problems when moving production to new facilities in the US.

"The operational issues, whilst temporary, are causing a greater impact than previously anticipated," management conceded yesterday.

As a consequence, this year's underlying profit will likely only be "slightly ahead" of the £151 million it delivered in 2025: almost £20 million less than investors had been expecting.

Vesuvius shares were, by some distance, the worst performers among all of London's biggest companies yesterday, dropping 58p, or 12.8 per cent, to a three-month low of 394p.

The broader London market fared much better as the latest cooling of tensions in the Middle East encouraged investors to part with their cash. The FTSE 100 recovered 45.52 points, or 0.4 per cent, to 10,781.75 while, a tier below, the FTSE 250 increased 96.61 points, or 0.4 per cent, to 23,898.10.

With investors rediscovering their risk appetite, any technology-related company enjoyed a bounce.

Trainline, the ticketing app, improved 11¼p, or 5.1 per cent, to 231½p; **Trustpilot**, the online review site, added 15¾p, or 6.2 per cent, to 272p; and **Playtech**, the maker of gambling software, gained 18½p, or 5 per cent, to 390¼p. One of the few to miss out on the rally was **Bytes Technology**, the UK's largest reseller of Microsoft software, after analysts at UBS advised clients to take profits following a decent run for the shares so far in 2026. Bytes shares fell 12¼p, or 2.9 per cent, to 404p, although they remain 13 per cent higher than where they started the year.

But London's oilers were out of favour as volatile crude prices, having jumped last week, retreated as the US and Iran continued to pause their military action.

BP shares declined 14p, or 2.6 per cent, to 534¼p and **Energean**, which has wells in the North Sea, slipped 58½p, or 7.1 per cent, to 769½p.

Wall Street report

It was a muted day on Wall Street at the start of a major week for US tech earnings, as investors braced for results from Apple, Meta and Microsoft. A further sell-off in chip stocks largely offset optimism around easing tensions between America and Iran. The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite reversed Friday's recovery and ended the day down 0.18 per cent at 24,932.08. The S&P 500 and the Dow Jones proved more resilient, ending the session up 0.02 per cent to 7,413.18 and 0.51 per cent higher at 52,210.08 respectively.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
GB Group	6.8%
Trustpilot Group	6.2%
GlobalData	5.9%
Rank Group	5.2%
Trainline	5.1%
Raspberry Pi Holdings	-4.7%
Harbour Energy	-5.7%
Energean	-7.1%
Ithaca Energy	-7.7%
Vesuvius	-12.8%

JACK COUSIN/GETTY IMAGES

Trainline, the ticketing app, rose 5 per cent as tech-related stocks had a bounce

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cranswick bulks up sales

Rising demand for protein-rich foods and "nutritionally balanced" diets has boosted sales at Cranswick.

The company, one of Britain's biggest pork producers, said that in the 13 weeks to June 27, like-for-like revenues were 4 per cent up on the same period a year earlier, while volumes rose by 6.4 per cent. Cranswick attributed growth to "robust demand" across its core product portfolio, which is being driven by consumers' "growing prioritisation of a healthy, protein-rich and nutritionally balanced diet".

The FTSE 250 company is a multibillion-pound business that spans pig farming, poultry and animal feed. It said revenues from its poultry business grew strongly, while domestic fresh pork sales were ahead of the same period last year on double-digit retail volume growth.

Sales in Cranswick's convenience products segment were also ahead, thanks to particularly strong growth for hummus and dips.

Over the period, Cranswick also formed a partnership with The Jolly Hog, a supplier of premium range sausages, bacon and cooked meats.

Analysts at Investec noted Cranswick's well-hedged position in energy costs gives it a "very high degree of resilience."

The shares, which are 10 per cent up since the start of the year, were down 40p, or 0.7 per cent, to £54.40.

Serica lands Pharos deal

One of Britain's biggest North Sea gas producers has struck a £146 million deal to move into Egypt and Vietnam. Serica Energy plans to buy London-listed Pharos Energy after gatecrashing a rival £124 million bid from the Israeli group Ratio Petroleum. The board of Pharos Energy has recommended the offer. The Serica package is worth 33.6p per share, made up of cash and dividends. The Pharos assets would add net production equivalent to about 6,000 barrels of oil per day. Serica said in early June that its average production this year had been 43,300 daily barrels.

IP Group tie-up abandoned

Railpen has walked away from a takeover attempt for IP Group, the FTSE 250 investment company. IP's board this month unanimously rejected a sweetened 71.3p-a-share offer from its largest shareholder, citing undervaluation of IP and its prospects. Railpen, which manages more than £34 billion worth of assets for railway pension schemes, had until yesterday to make a firm offer under UK takeover rules. It said it had "been unable to reach agreement with the board on the terms of a mutually acceptable proposal". IP Group shares closed down ½p at 66p, valuing it at £586.6 million.

Everyman revenue boost

The UK's last listed cinema operator is reaping the rewards of a summer of blockbusters as it revealed a sharp rise in half-year sales and profits. Everyman Media Group, whose directors want to scrap the upmarket chain's listing on Aim, reported a 23.9 per cent jump in revenues to £70 million in the 26 weeks to July 2, due to a strong film slate including *Toy Story 5*. Admissions to its 49 cinemas rose more than 20 per cent to 2.6 million, while the average price paid for ticket prices increased by 4.1 per cent to £12.97. Strong sales translated into a 32 per cent rise in adjusted profits to £10.8 million.

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.

12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
87⅝	34⅞	Aston Martin Lag	36	+ ½	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**	249¼	+ ¾	5.9	11.5
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0¾		...	-3.5
3730	2624	**Admiral**	3590	+ 2	5.7	14.6
662½	414⅜	AJ Bell	597	+ 1	2.5	23.2
28349¾	22372¼	AON Corp	27739¾	+ 680⅛	0.9	...
1130	799	Arbuthnot♦	840	+ 12½	6.5	7.7
276½	145⅞	Ashmore Group	206⅝	+ ¾	8.2	17.0
2126½	1457¼	Australia & NZ	1939¼	+ 27	5.9	18.9
700¾	590⅝	**Aviva**	687⅝	- 3⅜	5.7	25.6
1080	613	Banco Santander	1042	+ 30	1.6	13.4
554⅛	352⅝	**Barclays**	530⅜	+ 5	1.6	12.1
17½	4	Blue Star Capital♦	4½		...	-2.3
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦‡	678	- 1	5.4	5.1
363⅜	212	Bridgepoint Grp	332¾	+ 15¼	2.9	66.6
344½	258	Chesnara	338½	- 2	6.6	-67.0
488	346	City of London Grp	484	+ 6	6.8	16.1
563½	318⅜	Close Bros	426⅜	+ 5⅝	...	-6.4
752	203	CMC Markets‡	739	+ 16	1.9	26.9
2957⅝	2057	Deutsche Bank	2650¼	+ 48½	3.2	9.8
93	74¼	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	75⅛	+ ⅛	0.9	...
240¼	136	EPE Special Opps♦	215	+ 1	...	8.9
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4572⅜	2075	Georgia Capital	4140	- 30	...	2.5
57	43¼	Hansard Global	52½	+ 1	8.5	40.4
230	194	Helios U/W♦	223		4.5	7.7
1904	1246	**Hiscox**	1846	+ 6	2.0	13.6
1590	908¾	**HSBC**	1551¼	- 1⅝	3.6	17.1
1956	1016	**IG Group**	1713	+ 8	3.6	11.8
214½	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	110¼	+ 2¼	9.1	6.9
2340	1424⅞	**ICG**‡	1938	+ 72	4.5	11.6
257½	178¼	Intl Personal Fin	248½		...	10.0
142¾	115⅝	Intl Public P'ship	141	+ 1¼	6.2	-11.0
690	499⅜	**Investec**	643	+ 9	6.0	8.3
76	60	Investment Co	75		...	...
72	48	IP Group	66	- ⅜	1.9	9.1
27	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	8		43.8	2.5
214½	113⅜	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	166⅜	+ 3⅜	3.6	8.7
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs	649½	- 3	17.1	7.1
310	217¼	**Legal & General**	298⅛	- 1½	7.3	29.8
12040	6905	**Lion Finance Group**	11770	+ 70	3.1	8.2
385	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt‡	291	- 3	6.5	18.9
61	35⅜	Livermore Invs Grp♦	36¾	- ⅞	8.7	16.3
116	74⅜	**Lloyds Banking**	114¾	+ 1¼	3.2	16.4
22	14	LMS Capital	15¾	- ¼	25.5	...
10290	6684	**London Stock Exchange**	8948	+ 174	1.7	37.5
359¼	247	**M&G**	354⅞	- 1⅛	5.8	28.2
310⅝	154¼	Man Group	300	+ 2⅜	4.2	25.9
39¾	20	Manx Financial Grp♦‡	24½	- 1	2.1	4.5
10	1¼	Marechale Capital♦	4¾		...	-14.8
185	98¼	Metro Bank	178⅝	- ⅝	...	22.9
2621¼	1864⅝	National Australia	2152¼	+ 34¼	4.2	18.5
705⅜	500¼	**NatWest Group**	680¾	+ 4¾	4.8	12.7
842⅝	438⅜	PayPoint‡	610½	- 2	6.5	10.3
1238	910¼	**Prudential**	1089½	- 6½	1.8	9.4
1¼	0⅜	Quantum Blockchain♦	0⅜		...	-1.9
209	150⅜	Quilter	196¼	+ 1½	3.2	22.1
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1682	+ 14	5.9	15.6
325	245	Rockwood Strategic	320		...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1950	+ 5	5.9	10.0
3	0¼	Sancus Lending♦	1⅛		...	7.2
59⅛	43½	Schroder REIT	46		7.8	...
599½	358⅝	**Schroders**	589	+ ½	3.7	17.3
1575½	1050	**St James's Place**	1085	+ 14	1.7	10.9
2278	1285	**Standard Chart'd**	2136	- 1	2.2	14.5
921	615	**Standard Life**	913	- 3½	6.1	-193.8
6229½	4186	Sun Life Canada	6212½	+ 31¾	3.3	...
6¾	2¾	Tavistock Invs♦	3	- ⅛	3.3	2.5
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp	4828	+ 66	5.4	6.7
1¾	0¼	Tern♦	1½	+ ⅛	...	-1.7
60	40½	Time Finance♦	49¾		...	7.8
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0⅛		...	-1.7
4	1½	Truetide♦	3		...	-5.4
132	91¼	Vanquis Banking Gp	115¼	- 4⅝	...	36.0
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2120	- 30	...	11.2
7239⅝	5453⅛	Wells Fargo	6560⅞	+ 85⅛	2.1	...
2275⅜	1595⅞	Westpac Bkg Corp	1980¾	+ 33⅜	4.1	18.8
31¾	23	Worsley Investors	28¼		...	...
57494¾	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	57268¾	+ 89¼	4.8	19.5

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
380	181	Alumasc♦	227½	+ 10	4.9	8.8
6⅝	4½	Aseana Properties	4⅞		...	1.2
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1⅜		...	-140.0
900	519	Balfour Beatty	867	- 12	1.6	16.5
410¼	235⅜	**Barratt Redrow**	293¼	- 1⅜	5.8	21.6
2890	1715	Bellway	1975	- 4	3.6	14.9
4442	2796	Berkeley	3456	+ 24	...	10.4
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	900	+ 10½	5.2	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	422½	+ 2½	2.6	40.6
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	156	+ 5	5.0	8.9
383¾	271⅜	Breedon	320⅝	+ 5⅝	4.7	13.2
445⅝	318⅝	**British Land**	441	+ 2¼	5.2	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2086	1469⅜	Derwent London	2058	+ 20	4.0	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors♦	4⅝		...	-2.7
19½	11	First Property♦	11½		2.2	6.4
75	29	Fletcher King♦	37½		6.0	25.3
63	31¾	Foxtons Group	40¼	+ 1¾	2.9	9.3
632	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	619	- 4	3.2	18.4
406	241	Genuit Group	268	- 2¼	4.8	14.7
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	271½		4.1	10.0
1009¾	788⅝	Grafton Grp Units	952¼	+ 8¾	4.0	13.6
213	149½	Grainger	176⅞	- ¾	4.7	6.5
377	270	Great Portland Est	346⅝	+ 1⅝	2.4	0.0
377	263⅜	Hammerson	370¼	+ 3⅝	4.5	0.0
191	116¾	Harworth Group	125⅜	- 1⅝	1.4	43.2
400	270	Heath (Samuel)♦	290	- 10	4.5	8.3
251	180⅝	Helical‡	198	+ 2	1.3	41.0
159¾	87⅝	Ibstock	94¼	+ ¼	3.2	...
162½	112	James Halstead♦	120⅜	+ 1¾	7.4	12.4
3518	1238	Keller	3230	- 68	2.2	16.0
6668⅜	6463¼	Kingspan Group	6491		0.7	20.5
710¼	522½	**Land Securities**	699	+ 5½	5.9	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop**	197⅜	+ 2¼	6.3	...
25⅝	4¾	Macau Prop Opp Fd	6⅛		...	-0.3
226⅝	124	Marshalls	153½	+ 2½	4.4	26.9
113	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	78½		5.9	19.5
1⅛	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.3
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4454	- 52	3.7	12.0
10200	8405	Mountview Estates‡	8750	+ 25	6.0	16.8
83⅞	65¾	NewRiver REIT‡	82⅛	- ⅛	8.2	...
234	160	Palace Capital	181½	+ 1½	8.3	40.3
320	261	Panther Securities♦	296		4.1	12.1
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1112½	+ 5½	5.4	12.5
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props‡	95⅞	+ 1¼	7.6	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦‡	31¼		4.8	-62.4
849½	578¾	Safestore‡	622	+ 6½	5.0	...
1126	791½	Savills	933	+ 15	3.6	17.9
5½	0⅜	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.2
987¼	603	**Segro**	982	+ 3	3.2	...
162⅞	124⅛	Shaftesbury Capital	143⅝	+ 1	2.8	7.7
15¼	6¾	SIG	8¾	+ ¼	...	-1.6
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	124⅜	+ ⅛	...	17.1
113	86¾	Sirius Real Estate‡	100⅛	+ 1⅝	5.5	7.7
140	106	Smart (J)	112½		2.9	8.6
23¾	15	Steppe Cement♦	22		...	19.4
116⅞	74⅛	Taylor Wimpey	83⅝	+ ¾	9.1	29.9
140	104	Town Centre	131	+ 10½	3.8	...
723½	493⅜	Travis Perkins	554	+ 3½	2.2	-6.7
174	132¼	**Tritax Big Box**	172⅝	+ 1¾	4.8	...
790½	442¼	Unite Group	557½	+ 2½	6.8	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	284⅝	+ 1¼	...	6.7
434⅜	312	Workspace Group‡	350⅝	+ 1⅜	7.4	...
920	730	Wynnstay Props♦‡	865		3.3	12.0

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
229	88⅜	AEP Plantations‡	179	+ 4	3.4	10.3
30	17⅝	Airea♦	27½		3.6	10.8
340	216	Animalcare♦	333½		0.7	45.7
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2013	+ 17½	3.1	14.2
715⅜	590	Barr (AG)	635	+ 1	2.9	15.0
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**‡	4567	- 5	5.4	13.0
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1086	+ 18	...	...
184⅝	85⅜	C&C Group	103⅜	+ ⅜	4.8	...
5⅞	2¾	Capital Metals♦	4¾		...	-39.1
470	271	Churchill China♦	390	+ 2½	5.4	9.8
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	4918	+ 48	2.1	22.2
1500	742½	Colefax♦	1425		0.4	13.1
5810	4775	Cranswick‡	5440	- 40	2.1	18.4
2142	1295½	**Diageo**	1591	+ 28½	4.0	20.0
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.6
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1688	- 32	3.6	10.5
158	114½	Fevara	139	- 3½	1.7	6.0
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**‡	20220	+ 280	2.4	34.0
2185⅜	1028⅝	Glanbia	1974⅞	+ 2¾	1.9	35.9
307½	191⅛	Greencore	246	- 1¼	1.1	18.6
84¾	4⅝	Headlam	5¾	- ⅞	...	-0.1
862	447⅞	Hilton Food	551	+ 2½	6.4	6.3
3632	2626	**Imperial Brands**	2818	- 5	5.9	11.2
8069⅞	5567¾	Kerry Group	7044½	+ 214½	1.7	20.6
170	106¼	McBride	158¾	+ 3¼	1.9	8.1
150	85	Mulberry Group♦	145		...	-11.2
1444⅛	880	Nichols♦	994	+ 14	3.4	16.9
374	252	Norcros‡	315	+ 1	3.6	...
379	309	Origin Ents♦	366		4.0	8.6
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0½		...	-0.0
138¼	48½	Portmeirion♦	49½	- 1½	...	-1.1
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1¼		...	-60.0
110⅜	65⅛	PZ Cussons	107	+ ⅜	3.4	-77.5
138	87	REA	111	+ 3	...	-210.9
226	155	Tandem♦	170		1.8	11.0
330	220	The Character Grp♦‡	304		2.3	-45.1
10	4¼	Ukrproduct Grp♦	6		...	-14.0
5542⅛	3644	**Unilever**	4627	+ 51½	3.7	12.5
111	19½	Victoria♦	71¾	+ 5¼	...	-0.3

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2230	1458	Avon Technologies	1776	+ 22	1.1	67.7
1527	902⅜	**Babcock**	1124½	+ 3½	0.7	26.7
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	2000	+ 29	1.8	29.1
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1250		1.3	6.6
2197	1376	Braime Group♦	2100		0.8	11.1
550	350	Caffyns‡	444	+ 44	2.3	-10.9
0½	0⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	0¼		...	-6.1
340	202¼	Castings‡	312	+ 1	5.9	18.0
27	12⅜	Checkit♦	19	- ½	...	-7.3
620	446½	Chemring Group	600½	+ 4	1.3	33.7
55	28⅛	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	34		...	-37.8
1584	881⅛	Cohort♦	1280	- 10	1.4	24.5
510	171	Dialight	491	- 19	...	...
15	6⅛	Feedback♦	6⅛		...	-0.2
1270	463⅛	Gooch & Housego♦	1220		1.1	89.1
28500	7220	Goodwin	18680	+ 80	1.5	57.1
4902	3191⅜	**Halma**‡	3572	- 42	0.7	36.2
3145	1951¾	Hill & Smith	2990	- 40	1.8	29.1
2⅝	1	Image Scan♦	2⅛		...	-10.2
3076	2138	**IMI**	2980	- 70	1.1	24.0
7000	3480	Judges Sci.♦	4575	- 15	2.5	55.3
90	34	LPA♦	85	+ 2½	...	-32.2
685	443⅜	**Melrose**	472¼	+ 1⅞	1.5	16.3
251½	167	Morgan Advanced	221	- 4	5.5	29.5
405	200	Mpac♦	325	+ 8	...	-10.2
1800	1100	MS Intl♦	1470	- 10	1.8	21.8
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments‡	2952	- 40	0.8	34.9
2413⅜	1779⅛	Phillips Elec	2019⅜	+ 40¾	3.6	-47.2
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	2¼		...	-3.2
5490	2860	Renishaw	5165	- 40	1.5	44.8
1532⅝	970¼	**Rolls-Royce**	1413⅝	- 2	0.7	20.4
489¼	286⅜	Rotork	488		1.7	35.4
105	60	SDI Group♦	96	+ 2	...	24.9
318⅛	161	Senior	290½	+ 1	1.0	-284.8
2008	1974¾	SKF Group	1975⅝		3.0	29.7
2746¼	2088	**Smiths**	2656	- 22	1.8	31.0
215	135	Solid State♦	185		1.5	25.7
245	170	Somero Enter♦	225	- 5	3.4	15.8
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	6985	- 95	2.4	31.5
7½	4⅛	Tanfield♦	4½		...	-4.3
350	240	Thorpe FW♦	269	+ 13	2.7	12.4
145¼	47	Transense Tech♦	48	- 2½	...	5.2
507½	346⅝	Vesuvius	394	- 58	6.0	18.7
710	325	Volex	532	- 4	0.9	20.1
3580	2254	**Weir**	2574	- 42	1.6	26.9
2060	809⅞	XP Power	1660	- 38	...	-39.5

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	280½	+ ½	1.0	60.7
12⅛	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5⅜	- ⅝	...	-6.4
8	0⅞	CelLBxHealth♦	1¼		...	-0.2
580	370	Anpario♦	545	- 15	2.3	13.6
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**	12888	+ 218	1.9	26.0
4	1⅝	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1¾		...	2.5
259¼	193	**Convatec**	220¼	+ 4¼	2.4	34.1
38	20	Potter & Moore♦	23½	- ½	2.3	7.7
116⅞	72	Eco Animal Health♦	95½	- 5½	...	29.3
32	21¾	EKF Diagnostics♦	25½	- ¼	...	54.3
14⅞	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0⅜		...	-0.1
3228¾	1943	Genus	2220	+ 84	1.5	75.8
2282	1288⅝	**GSK**	1961	+ 41½	3.6	13.9
0¼	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.6
416⅛	274⅜	**Haleon**	370¼	+ 6¾	1.9	19.9
2046	1187	Hikma Pharma	1577	- 5	4.0	11.5
292	150½	Hutchmed China♦	169	+ 3	...	4.2
19⅜	1⅜	ImmuPharma♦	4¼	- ¼	...	-11.6
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	18½		...	-15.9
15	6¼	IXICO♦	8½		...	-4.6
1	0⅜	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0¾		...	-4.2
77⅝	53⅞	NIOX Group♦	64⅝	+ 1	2.4	38.2
CHF131.00	91.56	Novartis	CHF128.52	+ 1.62	2.9	41.9
962	374¼	Oxford Biomedica	570	- 1	...	-21.2
0¾	0¼	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-2.9
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1⅞	+ ⅛	...	-1.8
6522⅞	3664	**Reckitt Benck**	5026	+ 76	4.2	10.7
27	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	24½	+ ½	...	-105.2
29	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	22		...	-9.2
1441½	1050	**Smith & Neph**	1162	+ 22	2.5	21.4
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	231½	+ 7½	0.6	56.5
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	6¼	- ¼	...	1.8
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅜		...	-0.3

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	74⅞	+ 1½	...	32.8
4780½	3665⅛	BASF	4111¾	- 37⅛	4.7	26.4
4606¾	2164⅜	Bayer	4062⅛	+ 130¼	0.2	-12.9
98⅛	71	Coats Group	77½	+ 1¾	2.2	17.5
3312	2426¾	**Croda**	2925	- 7	3.8	65.9
414½	230	Cropper (James)♦	370		...	12.0
179⅝	136	Elementis	169¼	- ¼	1.9	-28.9
105¾	6¼	Hardide♦	105	+ 10½	...	...
4215	2095	International Paper	3150	+ 275	4.4	-8.1
2434	1730¾	Johnson Matthey‡	1905	- 13	4.0	-33.3
1212½	660	Mondi	752¾	+ 23⅜	3.3	23.5
169⅞	110	Robinson♦	127½		4.7	9.4
910⅞	597	Swire Pacific	907⅞	+ 5⅛	4.0	43.6
13	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	8¼		...	-7.6
124	16¾	Synthomer	81¼	- 3⅜	...	-0.8
2858¼	2026⅝	Takeda Pharma	2649	+ 61	3.5	-59.6
768	515	Victrex	765	+ 17	7.8	23.9
430	320	Wynnstay♦	365		4.9	36.9
479⅞	265	Zotefoams	454½	- 15	1.7	9.8

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
463	231	Accesso Tech♦	320	+ 1	...	15.2
260	160	Celtic♦	213		...	6.0
252¼	164	Domino's Pizza	197½	+ 3¼	5.7	13.1
1031½	500⅜	**Entain**	574⅜	+ 21	3.4	-5.5
75½	19¾	Evoke	45¼	+ 1⅛	...	-0.4
23610	6722	Flutter Ent	8088	+ 490	...	-51.2
55	29	Gaming Realms♦	30	- ⅜	...	14.8
294⅜	210	Heavitree♦‡	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A♦‡	225		2.9	4.2
$175.70	113.84	**InterCont'l Hotels**	$158.95	+ 2.35	1.1	32.4
308	223½	Mitch & Butlers	266½	+ 2½	...	9.0
297	129⅜	On The Beach	182	+ 4	2.2	33.1
166¼	86	Rank Group	99⅛	+ 4⅞	3.0	10.4
212⅜	137¼	SSP	194½	+ 3½	2.3	-20.9
1¼	0¼	Bow Street Group♦	0⅜		...	-0.3
810	530½	Wetherspoon JD	731½	+ 14½	1.6	12.2
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2460	+ 23	3.9	20.0

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
76⅛	51¼	Aeorema Comms♦	62		4.3	49.3
29	18	Altitude Group♦	26		...	20.3
115	70¼	Arcontech Group♦	79		5.1	11.2
844⅜	418⅝	**Autotrader**	510¾	+ 21¾	2.3	14.9
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub‡	616	+ 9	2.6	18.6
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1¾		...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½	- 2½	...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai♦	0⅛		...	-3.0
23½	9¼	Ebiquity♦	9⅜		...	-0.9
789	262¼	Future	307¾	+ 10¾	5.5	4.9
154	60⅝	GlobalData	77¾	+ 4¼	1.9	17.7
105	44	IG Design Group♦	104	+ 12½	1.0	-0.9
1000	719	**Informa**	887¼	+ 6¼	2.5	...
88⅞	65¾	ITV	74⅝	+ 1½	6.7	12.6
228	98½	ME Group	111¼	+ 5	7.5	7.4
0⅛	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	14.2
27	12	Mission Group♦	19		...	-0.9
220¼	139¾	Mony Group	198¼	+ 3¾	6.4	13.0
2341⅜	1624⅜	News Corp A	2065⅞	+ 56⅝	0.7	...
2606⅞	1891½	News Corp B	2324½	+ 70¼	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦‡	290½	+ 6	5.3	-9.7
1318	874¾	**Pearson**	1259	+ 33	2.0	24.5
4½	3¼	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜	- ⅛	...	5.0
78¼	40⅛	Reach	45	+ 3¼	13.1	-1.1
59	40	React♦	42½		...	-29.3
4008	1991	**Relx**	2682	+ 114	2.6	23.8
827	391⅜	Rightmove	457⅛	+ 19¾	2.3	16.3
270	131	SpaceandPeople♦	142½		...	6.6
194½	95⅝	STV Group	106¼		...	-9.8
470	170½	System1 Group♦	345		1.7	33.2
4301⅛	4301⅛	21st Cent Fox A	4301⅛		1.0	...
3351¼	3300	21st Cent Fox B	3351¼		1.3	...
369	230	Wilmington	280	+ 1	4.1	21.8
443¼	218½	WPP	294½	+ 12	5.1	5.9
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	56½	- 1	...	-5.5

Natural Resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	ADM Energy#	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8⅛	H-Power♦	10¾	+ ⅛	...	-4.5
89⅜	36¾	Afentra♦	62¼	- 2½	...	-59.1
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-1.2
0¼	0⅛	Alien Metals♦	0⅛		...	-13.1
2⅞	1	Aminex	1⅜	+ ⅛	...	-15.5
8924	3342½	Anglo Amer Plat	5072½	+ 73	4.0	19.2
4239	2042	**Anglo Amer**	3641	- 80	0.5	-14.6
435	154½	Anglo Asian Mng♦	388	- 22	0.8	33.3
4475	1850½	**Antofagasta**	3551	- 80	1.4	35.0
1¼	0⅜	Arc Minerals♦	0⅝		...	-1.3
2⅜	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1½	- ⅛	...	-149.0
0⅞	0¼	Arkle Resources♦	0¾		...	-11.0
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources♦	1½		...	-12.5
1094	440½	Atalaya Mine	905½	+ ½	1.0	17.4
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3		...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	6¾		...	-2.0

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	52210.08 (+262.83)
Nasdaq	24932.08 (-43.74)
S&P 500	7413.18 (+1.20)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	64931.19 (+320.04)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25207.18 (+243.95)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1081.13 (-8.91)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9063.80 (+122.30)
Frankfurt	
DAX	25361.03 (+262.03)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5620.24 (+31.90)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5707.41 (-27.37)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8406.06 (+33.78)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14421.97 (+94.77)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6282.21 (+1.27)
London	
FTSE100	10781.75 (+45.52)
FTSE250	23898.10 (+96.61)
FTSE350	5858.67 (+24.62)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5001.02 (-6.11)
FTSE All Share	5793.94 (+24.58)
FTSE Non Financials	6289.98 (nc)
TechMark Focus	9217.42 (+77.26)
US$	1.3301 (-0.0026)
Euro	1.1697 (-0.0016)
SDR	0.9813 (-0.0018)
CPI Jun (2015=100)	142.5
RPI Jun (1987=100)	416.5
RPIX Jun (1987=100)	409.7

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	86.83	87.24	86.83	87.06	214055	1350977
	26-Dec	86.99	86.99	86.99	87.05	122	6
	27-Mar				86.93	0	
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.245	96.25	96.245	96.245	5999	406449
	26-Sep	96.05	96.065	96.04	96.045	66350	431508
	26-Dec	95.825	95.855	95.815	95.82	81861	530101
	27-Mar	95.67	95.72	95.67	95.68	66238	381980
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.61	95.68	95.61	95.635	66224	388025
	27-Sep	95.615	95.685	95.615	95.645	54417	244874
	27-Dec	95.665	95.72	95.66	95.685	65004	293119
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.405	97.425	97.405	97.41	130464	681992
	26-Dec	97.22	97.245	97.215	97.225	215371	976071
	27-Mar	97.1	97.13	97.085	97.11	132419	479737
	27-Jun	97.04	97.095	97.04	97.075	178730	476679
	27-Sep	97.04	97.105	97.04	97.085	122802	455521
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun	100.0475	100.0475	100.0475	100.0475	2397	68975
	26-Sep	100.025	100.04	100.02	100.035	11837	72116
	26-Dec	99.915	99.97	99.91	99.965	18643	49332
	27-Mar	99.78	99.87	99.77	99.855	17188	31703
	27-Jun	99.675	99.78	99.66	99.76	15823	23734
	27-Sep	99.61	99.71	99.59	99.685	9552	26788
	27-Dec	99.575	99.655	99.545	99.63	6873	18945
FTSE100	26-Sep	10756	10833	10717.5	10803.5	64556	461933
	26-Dec	10840	10890	10840	10871.5	8	744
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8623.8	0	
	26-Dec				8668.4	0	

Tradeweb

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Commodities

Natural Gas $

2.775	-0.096

Light Crude Oil

83.16	-6.15

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI SEP 26	83.23 -6.08
WTI OCT 26	80.52 -4.63
WTI NOV 26	78.09 -3.64
WTI DEC 26	76.33 -3
WTI JAN 27	75.06 -2.61

Products

Fuel Oil	473.723	-3.77
Euro Naphtha	756.897	-7.797

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Aug1239.25-1238.75	Dec991.75-991.25
Sep1177-1176.5	Jan956.5-956
Oct1114.25-1113.75	
Nov1051-1050.75	Volume: 246272

Brent

Sep89.58-89.56	Dec82.05-82.02
Oct86.43-86.41	Jan80.69-80.66
Nov83.93-83.91	Volume: 1064023

Cocoa

Sep3843 -177	Sep 3950 -171
Dec3898 -183	Dec 3923 -168
Mar3987 -184	Mar 3987 -184
May3987 -179	May 3987 -179
Jul 3980 -172	Volume: 31305

Robusta Coffee

Sep3793 +36	Mar 3712 +44
Nov3776 +38	May 3676 +33
Jan3742 +42	Volume: 22618

White Sugar

Oct459.2 -1.6	Aug457.6 -1.1
Dec459.3 -1.7	Oct 456.3 -0.3
May 461 -1.5	
May 461 -1.5	Volume: 15864

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov198.5 -1.25	May206.25 -1.25
Jan 202.5	Jul 210
Mar 205	Volume: 7184

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	Bezant Resources♦	0⅛		...	11.3
3495	1873½	BHP Group	3111	- 20	3.3	23.3
14	6⅞	Border & Sthn Pet♦	12	- ¼	...	-100.2
122½	10½	Bougainville	11¼	- ¾	...	-16.6
609⅜	393¼	**BP**	534¼	- 14⅛	4.7	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.6
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	5⅛	+ ¼	...	-9.8
5½	2¾	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.1
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦	1410	+ 15	3.0	6.6
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.4
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	148	+ ⅜	8.1	-4.6
2¼	1⅛	Chariot Ltd♦	1⅝		...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.3
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.1
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	9½		...	-1.9
300½	99¼	DRD Gold	156½	- 1¼	2.6	13.4
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0¼		...	-3.4
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0⅛		...	-0.5
5620	2236	**Endeavour**	3576	- 31	3.0	17.0
28	9¾	EnQuest	25⅜	- 2⅛	3.2	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2½		...	16.7
2⅜	0½	Europa Oil & Gas♦	1¾		...	-8.5
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo#	28⅝		...	-4.5
4472	1371	**Fresnillo**	2553	+ 7	3.7	18.1
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	21	+ ½	...	-5.6
12½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	3⅛		...	-4.4
7½	2½	Gem Diamonds	3⅜	+ ⅛	...	-0.1
3¼	1⅝	Getech♦	2⅞	+ ½	...	-6.9
707¼	275¼	**Glencore**	519⅛	- 18¼	2.5	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration♦	0⅛		...	-4.3
4582¾	1771⅛	Gold Fields	2455⅝	+ 6⅛	4.7	...
21	5⅞	Goldplat♦	18	- ½	2.9	30.0
2	0¼	Goldstone Res♦	0⅝		...	-0.9
800	230	Greatland Resources♦	544½	+ ½	...	16.3
353¾	172⅞	Griffin Mining♦	300	- 8	...	33.0
235	157¼	Gulf Keystone	173¾	- 3	7.3	33.2
858	246¼	Hochschild	446	+ 1⅜	1.0	15.2
553	288½	Hunting	470	- 6½	2.1	23.9
0⅛	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.4
219¾	56¾	ITM Power♦	102⅝	+ ½	...	-13.9
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2⅜		...	-3.1
1⅛	0⅜	Karel Diamond Res♦	0⅝		...	-3.9
2⅛	0½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1		...	-9.3
345	178⅜	Kenmare Res	191	- 1	...	-0.7
5⅞	1¾	Landore Res♦	1¾		...	-1.8
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.2
4⅞	2⅝	Lexington Gold♦	2⅞		...	-29.2
19¼	10¼	Metals Exploration♦	13		...	16.4
0⅞	0¼	Nativo Resources♦	0¼		...	-0.1
4½	1	Nostrum Oil & Gas	4		...	-0.0
0⅝	0⅛	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-18.5
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	10	Orosur Mining♦	15¼	- ¾	...	...
190⅜	52⅝	Pan African Res	95	+ ⅛	2.3	17.6
33¼	6¾	Pantheon Res♦	12⅛	- ¾	...	-42.5
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	21½		...	3.2
22⅝	6¼	Petra Diamonds	6⅝	- ⅜	...	-0.2
1⅛	0½	Petrel Resources♦	1		...	-4.7
1⅝	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1⅛		...	-4.8
9	2¾	Plexus Holdings♦	3⅛		...	-1.2
920	672	Porvair‡	826	+ 4	0.8	21.0
5⅛	2⅛	Prospex Energy♦	3		...	-4.4
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	1		...	-5.9
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	77		...	-962.5
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5370⅞	Rio Tinto Ltd	8599¼	+ 210⅛	3.6	16.1
9117	4344½	**Rio Tinto**	6832	- 37	4.4	14.8
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0⅜		...	-15.4
375	178	Serabi Gold♦	265	+ 3	1.9	5.0
302⅜	146	Serica Energy♦	238⅜	- 18¾	6.7	-24.4
3758½	2553¾	**Shell**	3277	- 28½	3.4	14.4
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	3		...	-2.3
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1⅝		...	-1.4
24	5½	Star Energy♦	23	+ 2	...	-4.1
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy♦	1⅛		...	-1.1
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-2.9
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.4
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-7.2
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6358⅞	- 121⅛	...	12.3
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
19½	3½	Tullow Oil	13½	- ⅞	...	44.8
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2⅝	URU Metals♦	4⅝		...	-3.1
0⅜	0⅛	Vast Resources#	0⅛		...	-0.5
9	0⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3¼		...	-8.4
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1		...	-4.1
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3⅝	- ⅛	...	-8.4

Professional & Support Services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4570	2980	4imprint	4036	+ 88	4.4	13.3
585	464	Andrews Sykes♦	565	- 20	4.6	13.1
130	104	BTG Consulting♦	106		4.3	20.0
2800	1981	**Bunzl**	2768	+ 10	2.7	19.6
416	215	Capita	241½	+ 5	...	-1.7
49⅞	23⅝	CEPS♦	40½		...	-11.5
165	90	Christie Group♦	150½	+ 4½	2.3	29.6
2581⅛	2000	**Compass**‡	2332⅛	+ 59⅜	2.2	28.2
87	64½	Croma Security♦	70		3.4	12.2
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6340	+ 55	3.4	...
34	15	Diales Grp♦	32		4.7	24.6
7663¼	4970	**Diploma**	7630	+ 110	0.8	55.3
800	505	DiscoverIE‡	761	+ 22	1.7	25.2
114	78⅜	Essentra	96½	+ ¾	2.1	...
4092½	2203	**Experian**	2804	+ 60	1.8	22.7
330	150	FIH Group♦	152½		4.4	-3.7
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	804	+ 24	4.9	17.9
5845	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5835	+ 15	2.8	26.8
250¾	163½	Int'l Workplace	201¼	+ 1½	0.5	...
172⅛	123¾	Johnson Service	151⅞	+ 2	3.2	16.3
554	355	Journeo♦	475	- 5	...	19.5
254	178⅝	Kier Group	242¾	+ 3⅜	3.2	19.0
1220	910	Latham (J)♦	1090	+ 15	3.4	11.8
3755	2100	London Security♦	3600	+ 50	2.7	18.6
307	204	LSL Property Servs	242	- 1	4.7	14.6
103	59¾	Macfarlane	67⅜	+ ⅜	5.4	16.9
200	71¼	Maintel Holdings♦	72½		...	-6.1
28	15¼	Malvern Intl♦	21		...	-2.8
448½	310	Mears Group	436½	+ 2	4.0	7.8
290	101¼	Michael Page	184⅜	+ 3⅞	4.6	63.6
214	134¾	Mitie Group‡	209⅜		2.1	31.7
15¾	0¾	MobilityOne#	6¾		...	-2.1
137	71⅛	Newmark Security♦	110		...	15.6
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	187½		...	5.9
158	84⅞	Northern Bear♦	117		6.4	3.9
187½	110	NWF Group♦	141		6.0	11.4
60	42	PCI-PAL♦	44	+ ½	...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10¼		...	-15.3
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-6.4
0¾	0⅛	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.1
64	41⅜	Record‡	45	+ ⅜	8.0	11.5
978	772	Renew Holdings♦	921	- 8	2.2	14.9
507	342½	**Rentokil**	427	+ 1	2.1	30.5
289¾	222	Restore♦	282	+ 1	2.4	-60.0
7	1½	River Global A♦	2½		...	-0.3
30	13⅝	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
742¾	536⅞	RS Group	687½	+ 5	3.3	19.9
150	85	RTC Group♦	95	+ 5	7.1	6.7
113⅝	68	RWS Holdings♦	90½	+ 7⅜	7.0	-3.4
612	520	Science Group♦	580	- 7	1.7	7.7
325¾	203	Serco	242⅝	+ 2	1.9	16.9
79⅜	54	Smiths News	69¾	+ ¾	8.0	6.0
30	13¼	Software Circel♦	16		...	-76.2
52½	36	Staffline Group♦	47	+ 5	...	12.1
247½	132¼	SThree	244	+ 5	5.9	17.8
350	146	Synectics♦	185		2.7	8.4
2	0½	Thruvision Group♦	0⅝		...	-0.7
74	43¼	Tribal♦	61	- 2	2.1	14.5
91	58	Vianet♦‡	67	+ ½	3.6	46.9
490	294½	ZIGUP	455	+ ½	5.9	13.5

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
117⅜	82½	AO World‡	95⅝	+ 3⅜	...	15.0
269¼	140	B&M European‡	219	+ 5⅝	4.4	13.4
115¾	58¼	Card Factory	71½	+ 1¼	7.0	7.9
1648	1062	CVS Group	1233	+ 37	0.7	16.7
204	113	DFS Furniture	140	+ 1	0.7	13.3
1249	707	Dunelm	877	+ 9½	8.0	11.4
819½	598	Frasers Group	779½	+ 14½	...	9.0
1856	1407¼	Greggs	1635	+ 53	4.2	13.6
245	123¾	Halfords	237	+ 1	3.8	15.6
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	770½	+ 4½	2.9	15.7
895	640½	Inchcape	822	- 3½	3.9	11.3
1⅜	0⅜	Imaging Biometrics	0⅝		...	-3.5
106⅛	64	**JD Sports**‡	92¾	+ 3¾	1.3	10.7
372¼	240¼	**Kingfisher**	304	+ 4½	4.1	21.7
411¾	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	392	+ 11½	1.1	30.9
4	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0⅞	+ ¼	...	0.8
93¼	61¾	Naked Wines♦	72	- 3	...	-7.8
15105	11200	**Next**‡	15045	+ 260	1.8	19.8
397⅞	140¼	Ocado	184⅝	- 2¼	...	3.9
249¾	167¼	Pets at Home	200⅜	+ 3⅜	3.7	14.5
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	418	+ 103	...	87.1
680	171⅜	Saga	659	+ 5	...	...
370¾	291¼	**Sainsbury's**	349¼	+ 4¼	3.9	20.2
1120	378⅝	WH Smith	432	+ 6¾	...	-3.9
12½	4½	Sosandar♦	12½	+ ½	...	89.3
510⅜	406⅞	**Tesco**	483¾	+ 3⅜	3.0	17.6
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	34⅛	- ⅜	9.1	11.2

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
252	140⅜	Alfa Financial	168	+ 6⅜	5.7	16.5
315	196	Aptitude Software	196	- 5	2.8	26.8
129	55	Bango♦	67½		...	-9.1
20	12¼	BATM Adv Coms	13¾		...	-4.3
33	19⅞	Berkeley Res	25		...	-65.1
3¼	1⅜	Blackbird♦	1½		...	-2.4
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦‡	108½		3.1	-119.3
28	12½	Cirata♦	14⅞	- ⅛	...	-3.3
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0⅛		...	0.4
4962	2092	**Computacenter**	4818	+ 28	1.5	32.9
285	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	280	+ 5	0.4	47.8
13½	7½	Corero♦	8½		...	-113.1
2644	988	Craneware♦	1180	+ 32	2.8	27.9
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	87½		...	-3.6
9½	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	9⅛	+ ⅛	...	-7.8
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	10½		...	-7.2
0⅝	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
209½	94½	FDM Group	123⅜	+ 5¼	8.1	23.7
480	114	Filtronic♦	262	+ 3	...	40.8
265	180⅝	GB Group‡	221	+ 14	2.0	-7.2
51	24	Ilika♦	28¾		...	-8.1
138	56	Ingenta♦	61		7.4	5.1
178	73	Intercede♦	109½	+ 1½	...	19.2
28½	11⅛	Iomart♦	12¼	- ⅜	...	-1.5
72⅞	4⅝	IQE♦	47⅜	- 1½	...	-12.6
4453½	912⅝	LG Electronics	1669	+ 3¼	1.5	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	69	+ 3	3.0	15.7
14½	2	Nanoco Group	2⅝	+ ⅛	...	-2.4
138	94⅛	Netcall♦	118		0.8	48.2
36	22	Northamber♦	22½		2.7	-1.5
60⅜	37⅝	Oxford Metrics♦	38¼	- ¾	8.5	-69.5
31	17	Pennant Intl♦	29½		...	-5.9
447	210	Playtech	390¼	+ 18⅜	...	0.9
50	33⅛	Pulsar Group♦	35½		...	-4.5
551½	398½	QinetiQ‡	491	+ 1¼	2.2	24.4
117	88	RM	99	+ 4	...	38.1
6½	2⅜	Seeing Machines♦	4⅝	- ⅛	...	-11.1
70	35½	Shearwater Group♦	56	+ 10½	...	-1.4
1977	1083	Softcat	1930	+ 37	1.6	29.0
50	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	545	Tele Ericsson	724⅛	+ 20⅞	3.2	11.0
1335	771⅝	**The Sage Grp**	890¾	+ 32⅝	2.5	23.6
91⅝	52½	Touchstar♦‡	85½		3.8	-6.4
435	280	Tracsis♦	332½	- 31½	0.8	...
370	230	Triad Group	360		2.5	36.3
330	210	Water Intel♦	300		...	13.9
150	96⅜	Xaar	126½	+ 6½	...	-29.4
17	8½	Zoo Digital♦	9⅞	- ⅛	...	-1.6

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
436¼	192¼	**Airtel Africa**	348⅜	+ 14¼	1.5	24.9
242⅛	173	**BT Group**	198⅞	+ 5⅞	4.2	18.1
169⅜	106	Currys	163⅞	- ⅜	1.8	10.6
1186	687	Gamma Comms	954	+ 14	2.3	13.7
247⅝	113¼	Helios Towers	202¼	- ¾	...	72.7
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-4.4
1956	638	Telecom Plus	852		5.9	8.4
131⅛	80⅝	**Vodafone**‡	120⅛	+ 5½	3.3	-85.2

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
260	203⅛	Braemar	235	+ 12	3.0	32.5
4992	3365	Clarkson	4716	- 66	2.4	22.0
683¾	332⅝	EasyJet	620	+ 2	2.1	9.4
240⅜	152⅛	FirstGroup‡	181¼	- ⅝	4.0	8.5
554	320	Fisher (James)	472		...	-54.3
492⅞	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	440¾	+ 6½	1.5	7.2
685	452⅝	Irish Cont	675	+ 137½	2.1	16.9
40⅝	17	Mobico Group	25⅞	+ ⅞	...	-0.5
7	1⅝	Sutton Harbour♦	4¼		...	-0.4
1453	832	Wizz Air	1053	+ 13	...	...

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
220¼	153⅝	**Centrica**	159¾	- 3¼	3.5	-106.5
937½	613⅞	Drax Group	764½	+ ½	3.8	36.9
485	420	Jersey Electricity	445		4.9	12.4
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1222½	- 15	4.0	18.7
606	439⅜	Pennon‡	461	- 7¼	6.4	23.8
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3008	- 12	4.2	24.4
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2377	- 45	2.9	22.5
1497	1072	**United Utilities**‡	1366	- 2	3.9	15.9

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2802	+ 44	3.0	5.2
394½	325	3i Infrastructure	384½	- 1	3.5	12.0
1758	1408⅛	Aberforth Smlr	1712	- 4	3.4	26.7
1356	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1335	+ 12	2.2	72.2
395	321	Artemis UK Future Lead‡	381½	+ 8½	4.0	30.8
220	116⅜	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235⅛	AVI Global	255	+ 1½	1.8	50.3
194	154½	AVI Japan	168½	+ 3	1.3	57.3
331	260	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	307	+ 5	0.8	...
116½	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	114	- ½	0.6	...
1026	811⅛	Baillie Gifford Jpn	988	+ 8	1.0	...
168⅜	123	Baillie Gifford SN	160⅝	+ 2⅜	0.4	...
223	180⅛	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	216	+ 2	2.9	34.7
153⅜	120⅝	Bankers Invstmt Tst‡	147⅜	- ⅜	1.9	65.5
445	385	BH Macro GBP	417	- ½	...	19.7
1684	797⅜	Biotech Growth	1658	+ 34	...	-872.6
284	197	BlckRck Amer Inc	280	+ 2	5.0	98.9
205	116½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	176	- 2½	3.3	50.3
208	159½	BlckRck Fro Inv	192	+ 5	4.0	25.2
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	594	+ 1	1.2	86.2
238	198	BlckRck Inc&Grth‡	232	+ 1	3.3	32.1
288⅜	230¾	BlckRck Smlr	272½		2.9	31.1
1072⅞	543⅛	BlckRck Wld Min	876	- 8	2.7	36.4
1665	1274	Brown Adv US Sm	1620	+ 12½	...	-270.5
1562	1336	Brunner	1506	+ 6	1.8	54.1
395	312	Caledonia Inv‡	384	+ 3	2.0	49.9
592	486	City of Lon IT‡	586	+ 4	3.8	27.2
156⅝	87½	Crystal Amber Fd	89½	- 1	-64.9	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord‡	500	+ 1½	5.6	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	354½	+ 3½	3.8	29.2
120	92	CT UK HIT B‡	108½	+ 1½	5.5	22.4
126	97	CT UK HIT‡	114¾	+ 2½	5.2	23.7
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent#	475		...	...
842	737⅝	Edinburgh IT	837	+ 7	3.8	31.5
294½	185¼	Edin Wwide	240	- 2	...	-216.2
965	782	European Opps‡	940	+ 30	...	-712.1
1332	325¾	**F&C Inv Trust**‡	333	- ⅜	1.3	74.1
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	586		3.5	26.0
339	241	Fidelity China Sp‡	258½	+ 1½	3.5	28.0
1574	810	FdityEmrgMkt	1410	- 2	1.4	60.5
442	367½	Fidelity European Trust	425	+ 1½	2.3	37.6
460½	372	Fidlty Spec Val	458½	+ 6½	2.3	37.3
939	706¼	Fins Gwth & Inc	787	+ 18	2.6	41.6
84¼	69¾	GCP Infrastructure	82½	+ ⅛	8.5	38.4
370	312	Global Opps Tst	331½	+ 5½	3.1	42.5
90	86⅛	Golden Prospect‡	87¾		-13.1	...
69½	57⅛	Greencoat Renew	68	+ 1½	-16.9	...
127⅞	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind	107¼	- ¾	10.0	-12.3
344	250	Hansa Investment Co‡	320	- 4	1.4	72.7
330	244	Hansa Inv Co A‡	320	+ 10	1.4	72.7
3470	2630⅞	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3380	+ 30	...	-56.2
211	173¼	Hend High Inc	206	+ 2	5.4	18.3
966	769	Hend Smlr	950	+ 1	2.9	34.1
3290¾	2285	Herald Inv Trust	2980	+ 5	...	...
530	318⅝	HgCapital Trust	387	+ 6½	1.3	...
138	107¼	HICL Infra	135⅝	+ 1⅜	6.3	9.8
1611⅜	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr	1400	+ 4	3.0	-394.4
494¾	379	Impax Env Mkts	432½	+ 2½	1.2	87.6
519	365	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr‡	475	+ 1½	4.0	48.3
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc‡	170½		7.2	13.0
418	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc‡	409	+ 1	3.9	81.6
1238	1041	JPM American	1200	- 10	1.0	...
652	388⅛	JPM Asia Gro & Inc‡	554	- 8	5.6	...
313	246½	JPM China‡	268	+ 2	5.1	68.9
968	782½	JPM Claverhs‡	958	+ 8	3.8	28.4
310	181⅝	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	250	- 2	0.2	...
181¼	118⅜	JPM Em Mkts‡	160⅜	- 2	4.7	69.7
666	548	JPMorgan Euro ‡	620	- 1	2.6	34.1
221	145	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc‡	199½		3.0	35.1
615	529⅝	JPM GG&I	606	+ 1½	4.1	73.3
1106	799	JPM India‡	877	+ 17	5.1	...
849	633	JPM Japan	793	+ 1	1.1	78.1
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	432½	- 1	0.7	...
1254	977⅜	Law Debenture	1242	+ 8	3.0	33.3
186½	141½	Lowland Inv‡	182	+ 2	3.7	27.0
138½	138	Marwyn Val Inv	139		15.3	...
282	234¼	Mercantile IT‡	280	+ 2½	2.9	30.3
665	536	Merchants Trust‡	659	+ 6	4.5	21.6
804	682	Mid Wynd	772	+ 10	1.1	...
1664	1322	Monks Inv Trust	1582	+ 2	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml	173½	+ 1	0.9	89.4
1022	854⅝	Murray Income Trust	1008	+ 9	4.0	26.1
369	283¼	Murray Intl‡	365½	+ 4	3.4	26.3
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	407	- 1	1.4	72.7
409	319½	Pantheon Intl	391	+ 1	...	-55.7
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**	3790	+ 76	1.5	3.6
555	507	Personal Assets‡	538	+ 4	1.0	89.2
743½	382⅛	**Polar CapTech**	629½	- 16	...	-749.4
90¼	63¼	Renewables Infra	76⅜	+ ⅜	9.9	-14.1
2610	1906⅛	RIT Cap Ptnr	2440	- 70	1.8	...
990⅝	490	Riverstone	582	+ 14	...	-356.8
738	488¾	Schroder TotRt	669	+ 9	1.7	68.2
892	585	Schrd Asia Pac	796	- 4	1.6	60.3
370	310	Schrod Inc Gwth‡	367	+ 10	4.0	29.2
401	258	Schrod Jap Gwth‡	370	+ 1	3.3	53.5
768	652	Schrod UKMid‡	748	+ 9	3.0	29.9
17¾	12¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	17¼	+ ⅜	...	-71.8
558	480⅛	Scot American	551	+ 5	2.9	35.2
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1329	+ 13	0.3	...
85½	75½	Sequoia Eco‡	84¾	+ ⅜	8.1	12.4
253	215⅞	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	229		3.7	35.3
352	196¼	Temp Emg Mkt‡	306	- 3	1.7	56.8
412	329	Temple Bar	410	+ 4	3.8	29.7
198⅜	162⅜	The Glbl Smaller	193	+ ¼	1.6	65.4
9	0⅜	Potentially AI	7½	- ¾	-1.9	...
364½	291	TR Property‡	316½	+ 4	5.1	20.0
208	189	UIL	196		19.3	...
302	239⅞	Utilico Emerging Mkt‡	283	+ 1	3.4	20.9
865	670	Vietnam Ent Inv	689	- 1	...	4.4
398	306½	Ww Health	388½	+ 4	0.6	...

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.9024 (-0.0061)
Canada $	1.87735 (-0.0004)
Denmark Kr	8.73979 (-0.02171)
Euro	1.169 (-0.0027)
Hong Kong $	10.429 (-0.017)
Hungary	420.62 (-2.1)
Indonesia	23917.94 (+0.06)
Israel	4.0672 (-0.0021)
Japan Yen	217.748 (-0.534)
New Zealand $	2.3017 (+0.00096)
Norway Kr	12.8428 (+0.0769)
Poland	5.0515 (-0.0212)
Russia	103.781 (+0.335)
S Africa	22.26294 (-0.13816)
Sweden Kr	12.93177 (-0.01423)
Switzerland Fr	1.08907 (-0.00073)
Turkey Lira	62.9864 (-0.0794)
USA $	1.3301 (-0.0018)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4052.28

Close $4078.94 **High** $4116.43

Low $4052.28

AM $4091.10 **PM** $4075.00

Platinum $1629.3

Silver $58.618

Palladium $1293.686

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7402	8.7465	-144.429	-427.773
Euro	1.1690	1.1695	-16.22	-44.1
Montreal	1.8772	1.8778	-25.09	-79.17
New York	1.3301	1.3319	0.35	1.75
Oslo	12.8444	12.7774	51.5	157.65
Tokyo	217.7470	218.1660	-57.8	-163
Zurich	1.0891	1.0891	-39.47	-110.83

Other sterling

Argentine peso	1994.06445-1994.06653
Australian dollar	1.90239-1.90255
Bahrain dinar	0.50060-0.50260
Brazilian real	6.78840-6.79040
Euro	1.16910-1.16990
Hong Kong dollar	10.43000-10.43400
Indian rupee	127.50440-127.58440
Indonesian rupiah	23917.93945-23957.93945
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41190-0.41390
Malaysian ringgit	5.43380-5.43580
New Zealand dollar	2.30173-2.30202
Singaporean dollar	1.71724-1.71758
South African rand	22.26303-22.27582
UAE dirham	4.88500-4.88700

Dollar rates

Australia	1.42990-1.43070
Canada	1.41144-1.41156
Denmark	6.57110-6.57212
Euro	0.87890-0.87930
Hong Kong	7.84181-7.84219
Japan	163.70599-163.71201
Malaysia	4.08300-4.08800
Norway	9.65720-9.65920
Singapore	1.29110-1.29118
Sweden	9.72044-9.72725
Switzerland	0.81875-0.81883

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> *Mrs Cooper*

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AQUABILITY EASY, SAFE BATHING

Billionaire businessman and philanthropist
Sir Ian Wood
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Register

Obituaries

Bill Oddie

Anarchic comedian and member of The Goodies who wrote the hit Funky Gibbon and went on to be a popular television birdwatcher

SHAUN HIGSON/TV TIMES VIA GETTY IMAGES

Oddie, right in The Goodies and below with his co-stars, turned increasingly to nature programming

For those who grew up in the 1970s Bill Oddie was the eternal Goodie, a cheerful television character in a long scarf who lived in a pigsty of a house with two friends, cracked lavatorial jokes and rode a bicycle made for three. Later generations knew him as a presenter of wildlife programmes including *Birding With Bill Oddie* and *Bill Oddie Goes Wild*, displaying a lively and unforced enthusiasm as well as an ability to talk off the cuff, never fazed when the rare species for which the cameras had been set up failed to appear.

The Goodies took its first bow in 1970, running for 77 episodes over 12 years. Their humour was endearingly daft and physical, owing much to the slapstick of cinema cartoons and silent films, with explosions, camera tricks and special effects as the trio mounted their "trandem". Setting off from their office in Cricklewood, they were prepared to do "anything, anytime", including being chased by a giant marauding kitten and abducted by alien rabbits. Amid the nonsense they addressed issues such as apartheid, with a sketch featuring a regime called Apart-Height where short people were segregated from the rest of society.

They were almost cartoon figures themselves: Tim Brooke-Taylor (obituary, April 13, 2020) playing an effete royalist in a Union Jack waistcoat; Graeme Garden as a bespectacled boffin; and Oddie the short, plump and eternally scruffy anarchist.

Unlike cartoon characters, however, the real-life Goodies, none of them trained stuntmen, often emerged bruised. In the opening credits Brooke-Taylor stuck a pike into a tree then spun around on the end of it like a Catherine wheel. Elsewhere Oddie walked on the roof of a moving double-decker bus while Garden risked being mowed down by a barrel hurling down a hill. "What we do is cartoon humour, and it hurts," Oddie noted.

He not only helped to write the show but also composed songs for it, several of which were released on albums and as singles, most memorably *Funky Gibbon* (1975), which spent ten weeks in the charts, peaking at No 4. When the BBC prevaricated over whether to do another series, *The Goodies* moved to London Weekend TV on a three-year contract but ran out of steam after one season.

Because of its perceived lack of sophistication and popularity among children, *The Goodies* was never accorded the critical acclaim of *Monty Python* and the trio's constant gripe was that the shows were not repeated. In 2005 the BBC relented and produced a tribute evening. The nostalgia gathered momentum. There was a DVD entitled *The Goodies ... At Last a Second Helping* and Oddie joined Brooke-Taylor and Garden for a two-week, sold out Goodies retrospective in Australia.

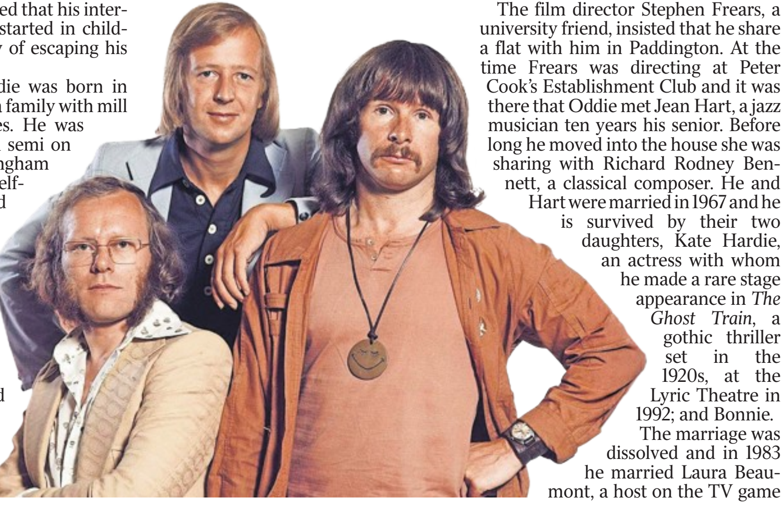
Yet Oddie's easygoing appearance hid a complex personality. He had a reputation for being bad-tempered and difficult to work with and while he mellowed later, he could still be irritating. At 60 he had a nervous breakdown and was admitted to a psychiatric hospital, where he reflected on a lack of maternal affection during childhood, a factor often associated with depression in later life. His mother, a violent schizophrenic who tried to kill his father, had been sectioned and Oddie saw little of her. "One of the memories is coming back from school when I can only have been about six ... and finding the whole house smashed up. It was like the end of a Greek party, except that the smashed plates were all covered in blood. My dad had been carted off to hospital," he said.

His therapist told him that babies were often involved in maternal mental health and while tracing his family history in 2004 for the BBC programme *Who Do You Think You Are?*, he discovered that in successive years his mother suffered a still-born baby and lost another child to cot death. He found the programme harrowing but it enabled him to soften the memory of his mother. He now realised that his interest in wildlife, which started in childhood, had been a way of escaping his family troubles.

William Edgar Oddie was born in Rochdale in 1941 into a family with mill workers on both sides. He was brought up in a small semi on the outskirts of Birmingham by his father, Harry, a self-made man who ended up as assistant chief accountant for the Midlands Electricity Board, and his overbearing paternal grandmother who "looked like a rhesus monkey". His mother, Lillian, was eventually discharged and they met, but he found it impossible to relate to her.

To his lasting shame he took up egg collecting at the age of six after finding a dunnock's egg. One year he asked for and received a pair of good binoculars for Christmas. By 13 he had discovered birdwatching and, as he wrote in his book *Gone Birding* (1983), "immediately became a better person". In his teens he wrote contributions to the West Midlands Bird Club's annual reports and in 1973 discussed birdsong recordings with Derek Jones for *Sounds Natural* on Radio 4.

His father, who had left school at 14, was determined that Bill should have the education he missed and encouraged him to work hard. He passed the 11-plus, went to Halesowen Grammar School and took a further exam for King Edward's School, where he was able to shine amid societies for birdwatching, jazz and debating. He won an exhibition to Pembroke College, Cambridge, taking a degree in English and emerging as a comedy writer and performer.



Before long he had become a star of Footlights, joining a group that included Brooke-Taylor, Garden, John Cleese, Jo Kendall and David Hatch in the revue *Cambridge Circus*, which played in the West End and went to New Zealand and Australia. Oddie moved with the *Cambridge Circus* team into radio, where he helped to write *I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again*, a sketch show billed as "a radio custard pie" that ran from 1964 to 1973.

The film director Stephen Frears, a university friend, insisted that he share a flat with him in Paddington. At the time Frears was directing at Peter Cook's Establishment Club and it was there that Oddie met Jean Hart, a jazz musician ten years his senior. Before long he moved into the house she was sharing with Richard Rodney Bennett, a classical composer. He and Hart were married in 1967 and he is survived by their two daughters, Kate Hardie, an actress with whom he made a rare stage appearance in *The Ghost Train*, a gothic thriller set in the 1920s, at the Lyric Theatre in 1992; and Bonnie.

The marriage was dissolved and in 1983 he married Laura Beaumont, a host on the TV game show *Sale of the Century*. When friends asked what they wanted for a wedding present he jokingly replied "a garden gnome", but the gag backfired and they ended with a garden full of them. In the 1980s the couple wrote two sitcoms for children, *From the Top*, and *The Bubblegum Brigade*. Beaumont survives him with their daughter, Rosie, a musician.

In 1967 Oddie and Garden were joined by Michael Palin and Terry Jones in a television series, *Twice a Fortnight*, but the different comedy styles failed to gel. Palin and Jones then joined Cleese in *Monty Python's Flying Circus* while Oddie and Garden appeared with Brooke-Taylor in *Broaden Your Mind*, a sort of dry run for *The Goodies*. Oddie and Garden were also principal writers for ITV's *Doctor in the House* (1969-70), a medical comedy loosely based on the novel by Richard Gordon, and wrote for two sequels, *Doctor at Large* and *Doctor in Charge*.

Oddie made a rare return to the theatre in 1988 playing Koko, the Lord High Executioner, in Jonathan Miller's production of *The Mikado* for English National Opera. He also took occasional acting spots on television, such as playing an eccentric ornithologist in John Mortimer's drama, *Titmuss Regained* (1991).

Gradually the focus of his activities shifted to wildlife. He began with small slots for *TV-am* and then moved to the BBC. In 1985 he presented *Oddie in Paradise*, a series filmed in Papua New Guinea. More programmes were succeeded from 2005 by *Springwatch*, which went out live daily and invited viewers to monitor wildlife and report on the effects of climate change. The programme drew a regular audience of three million to four million people and a similar project, *Autumnwatch*, was launched in 2006.

He also wrote several books about birdwatching, was a council member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and campaigned tirelessly on behalf of wildlife. One of his last television appearances was on *Celebrity Britain by Barge: Then & Now* (2020), gently navigating the country's inland waterways.

Closer to home, Oddie could often be found squelching through the early morning dew on Hampstead Heath with a couple of birding friends, wrapped in fleece jackets and with binoculars to their eyes. "Please don't call us twitchers," he begged of a Times interviewer in 1998. "We are birdwatchers or birders," he added, insisting that twitchers are the "anoraky side of birding", concerned largely with collecting numbers. "What we do is watch birds for pleasure. Of course it's nice to see rare stuff and I do make records." However, unlike *The Goodies*, "I'm not going to break my neck racing somewhere to do it."

Bill Oddie OBE, writer, actor and broadcaster, was born on July 7, 1941. He died of undisclosed causes on July 25, 2026, aged 85

Gunther von Hagens

Anatomist in a black fedora whose Body Worlds exhibitions and public autopsy appalled critics and fascinated millions

Gunther von Hagens glanced briefly at the corpse in front of him before raising a knife, cutting into its head and sawing through the skull. Opening the chest he stuck a hand in and, with the help of a colleague, dug out a large handful of organs. “I have liberated the lungs and the heart,” he declared with glee to the 500-strong sold-out audience at the Atlantis Gallery, a former brewery on Brick Lane, east London. More were watching on big screens in the rain outside.

This was November 2002 and von Hagens, a shrewd salesman with the instincts of a popular showman, was defying religious critics, moralising newspapers and police warnings to undertake the first public autopsy in Britain for 170 years. His subject was a 72-year-old man who had donated his body to the controversial German doctor’s *Body Worlds* exhibition. Many of those watching covered their mouths and noses as the stench from the open cadaver wafted through the room. Channel 4 televised the proceedings, though transmission was delayed until midnight and was preceded by a viewer warning.

To his supporters von Hagens was a scientific visionary whose spectacular exhibitions opened the eyes of millions to the reality of death. “My ambition is to democratise anatomy,” he declared to The Independent. To his critics von Hagens was the sinister ringmaster of a human freakshow, an image the pallid-faced anatomist cultivated with a slightly sinister black fedora clamped permanently to his head, a nod to Rembrandt’s 1632 painting *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp*. Günter Grass, the Nobel-prizewinning novelist, likened him to the notorious Nazi doctor Josef Mengele, while others called him Frankenstein.

Controversy surrounded his human specimens. In 2003 a coroner in Siberia was prosecuted after a shipment was intercepted containing 56 bodies. There were claims that in Kyrgyzstan von Hagens paid €10 for each corpse. When Der Spiegel published allegations in 2004 that some of his subjects were Chinese victims of executions, von Hagens successfully sought an injunction in the German courts preventing the allegations being repeated. However, he remained vague about their exact origins and cremated several after finding unexplained skull wounds.

These controversies and debates did no harm to von Hagens’s “flay and display” carnival, as a Times leading article called it. The first *Body Worlds*, featuring plasticised corpses in active poses such as fencing, horse riding, playing chess, cradling a glass of whisky or riding a bicycle, opened in Tokyo in 1995, before going on tour.

In Brussels, 5 per cent of the Belgian population visited, many of whom left pale-faced and determined to stop smoking or to take other measures to improve their health. Within half a decade, six million people had gazed at von Hagens’s corpses, or so he claimed. Both von Hagens and his exhibits made a cameo appearance in the James Bond film *Casino Royale* (2006).

The notorious British exhibition opened in March 2002, displaying 175 body parts and 25 whole bodies. They included a pregnant woman with her womb exposed to reveal a seven-month foetus and a skinned man whose skull had been cut away to reveal his brain. These and von Hagens’s much-vaunted plan for the public autopsy in November left the authorities considering if he was contravening the Anatomy Act 1832, brought in after the Burke and Hare scandal to prevent illicit trade in corpses.

SION TOUHIG, FRANCIS DEMANGE/GETTY IMAGES

Von Hagens always insisted that the purpose of his exhibits was educational

The anatomist was unmoved. “In every town we have exhibited we have faced a legal challenge, but always won,” he declared defiantly. “Criticism of the exhibition mostly comes from intellectuals who haven’t actually seen it. We are not dealing with decay or rotting flesh.”

Despite these threats of legal action and the presence of police officers, von Hagens went ahead with his London autopsy. Afterwards The Times spoke to members of the audience who, having watched with a mixture of fascination and revulsion, could not agree on whether they had witnessed education or entertainment. “It was very educational and fascinating. I don’t know what all the fuss is about,” said Marina Batra, 40, an office manager. Michael Walkes, head of the British Medical Association’s ethics committee, said it was more of a show than a lecture, adding: “I’m not satisfied there was sufficient educational value.” Nevertheless, no criminal charges were brought against von Hagens or his team.

Although there were hundreds of complaints about the Channel 4 programme it was nominated for a Royal Television Society award and was repeated in 2006. Meanwhile, in 2005 the channel showed *Anatomy for Beginners*, a four-part series featuring von Hagens at work in a German lecture theatre, which was described in a Times review as a “ghoulish spectacle close to the bone”.

The channel came up with a new angle on death in *Autopsy: Emergency Room* (originally called *Gunther’s ER*) in 2007, using corpses to examine the impact of accidents and assaults on the body and demonstrating medical procedures that could have saved their lives. In one show he performed a tracheotomy on a corpse, opening up the chest “like a pair of double doors”, connecting the socket to a pair of bellows and pumping the lungs up and down. At the same time an “anatomy artist” was painting a realistic set of lungs on the chest of a naked, living woman — all in front of a live audience.

Von Hagens insisted that his goal was to remove the mystery surrounding death. “I want to show the human body as it has never been shown before,” he said. “Before I came on the scene, anatomy books contained no lifelike poses. Now they all have them. I gave anatomy life.”

He was born Gunther Gerhard Liebchen in 1945 in Alt-Skalden (now Skalmierzyce), near Poznan, in German-occupied Poland, one of five children of Gerhard Liebchen, a member of the SS who allegedly sent 60 Poles to a concentration camp, and his wife.

He was five days old when his parents took him west by horse and cart to escape the advancing Red Army. They settled in Greiz, which wound up in East Germany. Von Hagens recalled childhood holidays at an uncle’s farm south of Berlin. “I was intrigued by the animals, saw the birth of a cow and took six weeks to build a rabbit hutch,” he recalled. At the age of eight he was presented with a violin for Christmas, which thereafter came out every Christmas Eve.

As a haemophiliac he spent much time in hospital, recalling that on one occasion while bleeding he overheard his doctor tell a colleague: “He will probably not make it.” This stimulated an interest in medicine, though first he dropped out of school to work as a lift operator and postman. He resumed his education at evening classes. By then he was a nursing assistant at a pharmacy and hospital, detesting having to change the spittoons for coughing patients on a chronic pulmonary ward. Having witnessed his first autopsy at 17, he began studying medicine at the University of Jena.

Von Hagens also developed an interest in politics. He took part in the 1968 student demonstrations, distributing leaflets protesting against the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops. He was stopped trying to cross the Czech border into Austria in January 1969 and tried again the next day but was arrested and jailed for two years.

Considered a political prisoner, he was freed when the West German government paid a ransom of 43,000 deutschmarks (about £75,000 in today’s money). He continued his studies at the University of Lübeck and in 1975 completed his PhD at the University of Heidelberg. That year he married Cornelia Hagens, a gynaecologist, adopting her surname to distance himself from his family’s Nazi past. They had three children: Rurik, who worked on the *Body Worlds* exhibition, Bera and Tona.

Plastination, a technique he devised in 1977 to replace the body’s fluids and fats with a non-toxic polymer that prevented decomposition, was designed to preserve the body for educational purposes. By 1992 he had completed the first “whole-body” plastination and the next year started the privately run Institute for Plastination. His headquarters were at Guben, a small town on the Polish border. Despite being a multimillionaire he did not own a car, wore cheap clothes, flew economy class and walked into Poland for supper because “the food is good and half the price compared with Germany”.

‘Anatomy books contained no lifelike poses. I gave them life’

In 2008 von Hagens was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease and began selling off his exhibits. He also began offering to preserve 2mm slices of deceased pets for their owners, explaining that for €460 “the little dog can then hang as a transparent slice on the wall and look at his master for all eternity”. Later came *Animals Inside Out*, extending plastination to animals on television and at the Natural History Museum.

His first marriage was dissolved and in 2009 he married Angelina Whalley, a former student 20 years his junior who had worked on *Body Worlds*. She described his single-minded pursuit of anatomy. “Sleeping, socialising, going out, dancing, visits to the theatre ... they are all, to him, a waste of time that keeps him from doing something useful, from pursuing his goals,” she sighed.

Body Worlds returned to Britain in 2009, now at the O2 arena in southeast London. This time the press, public and authorities merely shrugged at its presence, despite the inclusion of a cadaverous couple copulating. “It is the most human of all acts,” von Hagens told The Times. “To censor the anatomy of sex so as not to offend would be compromised science and a contrived mischief to me.”

Gunther von Hagens, anatomist, was born on January 10, 1945. He died from a brain haemorrhage on July 24, 2026, aged 81

Sir Ian Wood

Oil billionaire and philanthropist who recognised the potential of North Sea reserves

In 1972, as North Sea oil became a reality, a councillor in Aberdeenshire called Maitland Mackie somehow convinced a group of the county's all-too-often staid business leaders to go on a fact-finding trip to Texas.

Mackie, a Liberal whose family dairy was to develop Scotland's best-known ice-cream brand, had an inkling there was money to be made out of black gold. Not everyone was so sure. That included a young member of the delegation called Ian Wood, then aged about 30, who five years earlier had taken over his father's fishing firm in Aberdeen.

Wood had thought there might be some extra turnover from oil, which had been first struck in 1969. But it was in Houston, then buzzing with energy, that he realised there were fortunes to be made. "I hadn't a clue what I was going for, but it was a complete eureka experience," he told The Independent 25 years later. "I came back and said, 'We've got it wrong. We're going to have to form new companies and take on new people'."

Everybody expected oil companies to profit from North Sea oil and gas. What Wood, whose family business had repaired trawlers as well as run them, figured out was that the big drilling operators would need engineering, consulting and logistical support. That realisation earned Wood a fortune estimated at more than £1.8 billion in The Sunday Times Rich List this year.

He invested in yards and lorries and expertise — even as his father warned of the risks. By 1982, the year he turned 40, he had spun his oil engineering business into a separate firm, Wood Group, which at its multinational height was worth more than £5 billion.

Wood never adopted the swagger of the Texan oil barons, whom he described as "patronising" when they offered crumbs to local firms. Instead he adopted the frugal, canny style of the kind of northeast of Scotland farming and fishing leaders Mackie had taken to America.

Even when chief executive and chairman of a multinational, Wood would fly economy. The entrepreneur Sir Tom Hunter first came across Wood — "one of my heroes," he said — in an STV studio for a business programme. "I was in my early thirties and turned up in my fancy car to show off. When we were leaving Ian got into an old taxi. He was getting the train back to Aberdeen and I'm sure he had a hole in his cardigan! I learnt a lot from Ian — firstly, don't show off. He wore his wealth lightly."

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JAMES GLOSSOP

Wood created a logistics powerhouse

The former SNP MSP and minister Richard Lochhead stressed Wood's legendary thrift. "He was always down to earth," he said. "I remember when I invited him into parliament and I bought him a coffee and then apologised for not offering him a biscuit or cake. He told me not to worry as he dug into his old battered briefcase and produced two different packets of shortbread from different rail journeys."

Wood was capable of mocking his Presbyterian attitude to business, admitting that his "Scottish streak" had stopped him taking some bigger risks. He referred to himself as the "John Knox" member of the board of the Royal Bank of Scotland, referring to the great Scottish reformer.

Running a company in the North Sea took moral fibre, not least in 1988 when 39 Wood Group employees died on the Piper Alpha platform. They were among 167 men killed on the darkest day in the history of the industry in Scotland.

Ian Wood was born in 1942 in Aberdeen to John and Margaret Wood. He was educated at the fee-paying Robert Gordon's College and then at Aberdeen University, from which he graduated in 1964 with a first-class degree in psychology. He was offered an academic post but instead took what he thought was a summer job at the fishing business, running trawlers. "I'd not really thought about going into business," he later said. "My mother wanted me to be a professional." Later still he admitted he thought he would have been a disaster in the political world of academia.

Wood's career encompassed the great North Sea oil boom that made Aberdeen the self-proclaimed "oil capital of Europe", but he also witnessed its decline. Speaking to The Times in 2015, as oil prices hovered around $50 a barrel — approximately half today's value — he recalled: "There's a generation, probably two generations now, which have never known Aberdeen without oil. I did. I was dead lucky. I left university at 22 so I was about 26 when the oil started to appear.

"So I had known Aberdeen pre-oil. I won't know Aberdeen post-oil — I will have gone — but there are generations out there who have always just taken it for granted, and who have become very, very dependent on the oil and gas industry. They need to change their thinking."

Aberdeen, he said, should begin planning for "an oil-free future", which he believed involved upgrading the place itself. He was disappointed when the council turned down a plan he had proposed to regenerate the city centre, which he described as "a pretty sad place right now". The development he proposed had £140 million of funds ready to be invested, but it was rejected by councillors despite a local referendum, which he himself funded, and which suggested popular backing. The rejection by the council ensured the plan was, in his view, "dead in the water".

He believed, however, that the oil boom had created a generation of entrepreneurial people in the city who had the talent and ambition to create change. His advice to them was: "Stop looking backwards. Look forwards, look at the challenges we have and how we are going to deal with them."

Wood retired as chief executive of Wood Group in 2006, four years after taking it public, and as chairman in 2012.

The company after his departure was to run into difficulties, including making large payouts to cover for corruption scandals in two subsidiaries it had acquired. This year it was fined for making misleading financial statements and a Dubai-based company called Sidara completed a takeover of the Aberdeen business, which had lost its listing on the FTSE 100.

Right up to his death Wood chaired a family legacy business, The Don Fishing Company. But he and his family gradually sold off their share in Wood Group, not least to finance a wave of philanthropy. In 2015 he committed to give away half his fortune, supporting good causes at home and abroad.

A teetotal workaholic, Wood would spend 16 hours a day at the office but clock off early at weekends. He also served in a variety of public and charitable positions, including in economic regeneration for Aberdeen. A pragmatic unionist, he nevertheless advised Lochhead and other SNP ministers on energy policy.

His family stressed that he also always found time for his three sons, Nicholas, Graham and Garreth, and for his passion for sport. He had played rugby, well, at university, and enjoyed squash, tennis and skiing well into middle age. His wife, Lady Helen, and his sons survive him.

Wood was knighted in 1994, and made Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire in 2016. He was appointed to the Order of the Thistle, Scotland's highest order of chivalry, in 2018.

Sir Ian Wood, businessman and philanthropist, was born on July 21, 1942. He died on July 26, 2026, aged 84

Court Circular

Buckingham Palace
27th July, 2026

The King, Royal Honorary Air Commodore, this afternoon visited Royal Air Force Marham and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk (the Lady Dannatt) and the Station Commander (Group Captain Leonie Boyd).

His Majesty viewed a new accommodation block and subsequently officially opened the building.

The King afterwards viewed an F-35 Lightning stealth fighter jet inside one of the Station hangars and met pilots and aviators, before meeting more Service personnel and their families.

Later, Her Excellency the Hon Frances Adamson was received by The King upon relinquishing her appointment as Governor of South Australia.

Mr Rod Bunten was also received by His Majesty.

Mr Michael Dooley (His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset) was present at Bournemouth Airport today upon the Arrival of The President of Ukraine and welcomed His Excellency on behalf of The King.

St James's Palace
27th July, 2026

The Duke of Edinburgh, Colonel-in-Chief, The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, this afternoon held a Meeting via video link with Lieutenant Colonel Angelo Manzara (Commanding Officer) in Canada.

Kensington Palace
27th July, 2026

The Duke of Kent, Patron, National Army Museum, this morning received Mr Justin Maciejewski upon relinquishing his appointment as Director.

Lieutenant General Sir Simon Mayall (Chairman) and Lieutenant General Sir George Norton (Deputy Chairman) were present.

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GOD has been kind enough to trust us with this work. This is why we never give up. 2 Corinthians 4.1 (CEV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

HOWARD on 11th July 2026 to Laura (née Wood) and Craig, a son, Alexander George.

Deaths

BEARDMORE

Professor John Alec passed away peacefully on 29th June 2026, aged 96, in hospital surrounded by his beloved wife Patricia and his four children. A private family memorial service was held at St Paul's Church, Camberley, on 20th July 2026.

ENSUM Patricia on 21st July 2026, aged 90. Beloved mother of Kathryn. Formerly of Seend, Wiltshire. Pat died peacefully at a care home in Scotland, with her daughter by her side. Funeral service at Alex Black Funeral Care, Drumchapel, Glasgow G15 7XN, Friday 7th August, 2pm.

FERRAND John Geoffrey (Johnny the Fish / The Ferret) died peacefully after a short illness on 23rd July 2026, aged 76. Much-loved father, grandfather, brother and friend. Once met, never forgotten. Private cremation with a service of thanksgiving in Lambourn at 2.30pm on Monday 21st September.

JOHN HORAM (LORD HORAM OF GRIMSARGH)

John died reluctantly but comfortably on Friday 24th July, following an accident. A dedicated politician and a kind and generous man. He was 87. A private family cremation will be followed by a memorial service in the autumn. Please do not mourn, but drink a silent toast to a man who loved life.

HUSSELBY William Eric OBE, DL, died peacefully on 17th July 2026, aged 87. A hugely loved husband, father and grandfather. A private family funeral will be held, with a memorial service to follow in October.

SWORDS Michael James Colm died on 12th July 2026, aged 91. Sadly missed by family and friends. Funeral mass at noon 13th August at St John the Evangelist, Islington, London. May he rest in peace.

WALKER Philip Nigel on 9th July 2026, aged 81. Died peacefully at home. Dearest husband of Sue. Thanksgiving service 20th August, 1pm. All inquiries c/o Matthew Lucas, funeral directors, Poundbury, Dorchester.

YARKER Margaret Elizabeth died peacefully at The Lawns, Kempsey, Worcester, on July 11th 2026, aged 84. Funeral service will be held at the church of St Martin & St Peter, London Road, Worcester WR5 2ED, on Tuesday 11th August at 2pm. For further details please contact E Hill & Son funeral directors, 01386 552141.

In Memoriam - Private

LIPWORTH Bertrand Ivan. In cherished memory of Bertrand, who died 11 years ago: "How like a winter your absence has been" (adapted from Shakespeare)

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JUNE 2027

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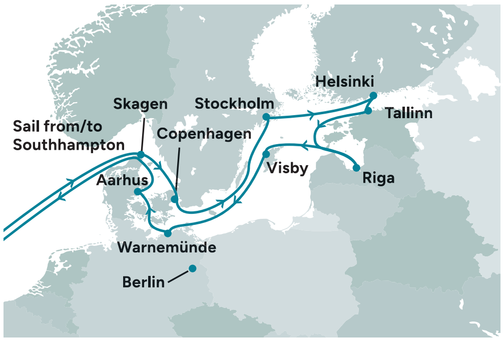
Fri 11	**Copenhagen, Denmark**
Sun 13	**Stockholm, Sweden** **★Recommended Excursion×: Highlights of Stockholm & Vasa Museum** Enjoy an orientation drive through Sweden's watery, wonderful capital city, passing sights like the Royal Palace, the Royal Opera House and the Swedish Parliament Building. Then, tour the Vasa Museum, where the world's oldest complete ship sits reassembled after 333 years under water
Mon 14	**Helsinki, Finland**
Tue 15	**Tallinn, Estonia** (depart early pm)
Wed 16	**Riga, Latvia**
Thu 17	**Visby, Sweden** (depart early pm)
Fri 18	**Berlin (from Warnemünde), Germany**
Sat 19	**Aarhus, Denmark**
Tue 22	**Arrive in Southampton**

Dates not mentioned are spent relaxing at sea



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Today Hot and dry in the south. Heavy rain in Scotland, with showers elsewhere. Max 31C (88F), min 9C (48F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	19	PC	0.0	1.4
Aberporth	19	C	0.0	1.6
Anglesey	17	C	0.0	7.4
Aviemore	16	C	1.8	0.7
Barnstaple	20	C	0.0	**
Bedford	22	PC	0.0	**
Belfast	19	C	0.2	1.5
Birmingham	21	C	0.0	**
Bournemouth	22	PC	0.0	9.7
Bridlington	20	C	0.2	**
Bristol	22	S	0.0	6.8
Camborne	20	C	0.0	7.9
Cardiff	20	C	0.0	9.9
Edinburgh	19	R	0.0	3.0
Eskdalemuir	16	C	0.4	3.8
Glasgow	17	C	0.0	3.6
Hereford	23	PC	0.0	**
Herstmonceux	24	PC	0.0	5.4
Ipswich	22	C	0.0	3.7
Isle of Man	16	C	0.6	1.8
Isle of Wight	24	PC	0.0	**
Jersey	21	C	0.0	5.2
Keswick	16	C	0.2	**
Kinloss	19	**	0.0	3.7
Leeds	16	C	0.2	**
Lerwick	14	PC	7.6	1.8
Leuchars	19	C	3.0	2.9
Lincoln	19	C	0.0	3.9
Liverpool	18	C	0.8	**
London	23	PC	0.0	4.7
Lyneham	22	PC	0.0	7.7
Manchester	20	C	1.2	0.3
Margate	21	C	0.0	5.8
Milford Haven	20	C	0.0	**
Newcastle	18	C	0.0	**
Nottingham	19	C	0.0	5.1
Orkney	16	C	0.0	**
Oxford	22	PC	0.0	**
Plymouth	22	C	0.0	**
Portland	21	PC	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	20	C	0.0	**
Shoreham	24	PC	0.0	5.0
Shrewsbury	21	PC	0.0	0.5
Snowdonia	15	C	0.2	**
Southend	22	C	0.0	5.1
South Uist	16	R	0.0	**
Stornoway	15	D	0.0	5.6
Tiree	15	R	0.8	5.8
Whitehaven	16	C	0.0	4.6
Wick	16	C	0.0	**
Yeovilton	22	PC	0.0	7.9

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	31	PC	Madeira	26	PC
Amsterdam	21	PC	Madrid	30	S
Athens	33	S	Malaga	27	PC
Auckland	**	**	Mallorca	30	PC
Bahrain	38	S	Malta	31	PC
Bangkok	33	PC	Melbourne	11	DU
Barbados	29	PC	Mexico City	24	B
Barcelona	28	PC	Miami	27	**
Beijing	**	**	Milan	32	S
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	27	SH
Belgrade	30	S	Montreal	27	B
Berlin	21	PC	Moscow	23	B
Bermuda	29	SH	Mumbai	30	M
Bordeaux	25	B	Munich	22	PC
Brussels	21	PC	Nairobi	19	B
Bucharest	29	S	Naples	31	PC
Budapest	30	S	New Orleans	32	PC
Buenos Aires	**	**	New York	27	PC
Cairo	33	PC	Nice	29	PC
Calcutta	29	R	Nicosia	34	PC
Canberra	11	PC	Oslo	20	S
Cape Town	17	PC	Paris	24	B
Chicago	32	B	Perth	17	PC
Copenhagen	18	B	Prague	15	SH
Corfu	31	PC	Reykjavik	17	PC
Delhi	35	PC	Riga	22	PC
Dubai	42	PC	Rio de Janeiro	25	PC
Dublin	19	B	Riyadh	40	S
Faro	29	S	Rome	30	PC
Florence	31	PC	San Francisco	19	PC
Frankfurt	23	PC	Santiago	17	S
Geneva	26	PC	São Paulo	21	S
Gibraltar	26	B	Seoul	30	B
Helsinki	19	B	Seychelles	27	SH
Hong Kong	28	PC	Singapore	31	PC
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	26	S
Istanbul	27	S	Stockholm	17	PC
Jerusalem	31	PC	Sydney	17	PC
Johannesburg	18	S	Tel Aviv	31	PC
Kuala Lumpur	32	SH	Tenerife	28	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	29	PC
Lanzarote	29	PC	Vancouver	17	R
Las Palmas	27	PC	Venice	**	**
Lima	22	PC	Vienna	22	PC
Lisbon	34	S	Warsaw	20	B
Los Angeles	24	B	Washington	27	B
Luxor	38	S	Zurich	**	**

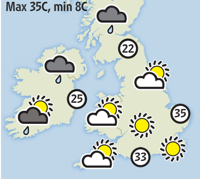
Five days ahead

Largely hot and dry in the south, but cloudier with rain and blustery winds further north and west

Tomorrow

Very hot, dry and sunny in southeastern Britain. Cooler with a band of cloud and rain pushing eastwards across the rest of Britain and Ireland.

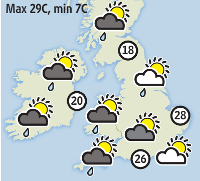
Max 35C, min 8C



Thursday

Mainly dry across England and Wales with sunny spells, but some thicker cloud may bring an isolated shower. Sunny spells and scattered showers in Scotland and Ireland, heavy at times.

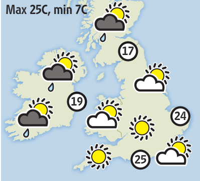
Max 29C, min 7C



Friday

Cloud and widespread showers across the north, with dry and sunny conditions further south. Temperatures feeling much cooler, but still warm in the south.

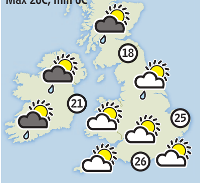
Max 25C, min 7C



Saturday

Mainly dry with warm spells of sunshine over England and Wales. Rather cloudy with showery rain across Scotland and Ireland.

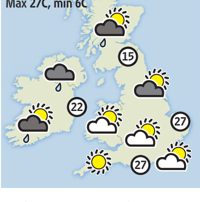
Max 26C, min 6C



Sunday

Mainly sunny, dry and warm once again in the south. Rather cloudy with rain across Scotland and Ireland, heavy in places.

Max 27C, min 6C



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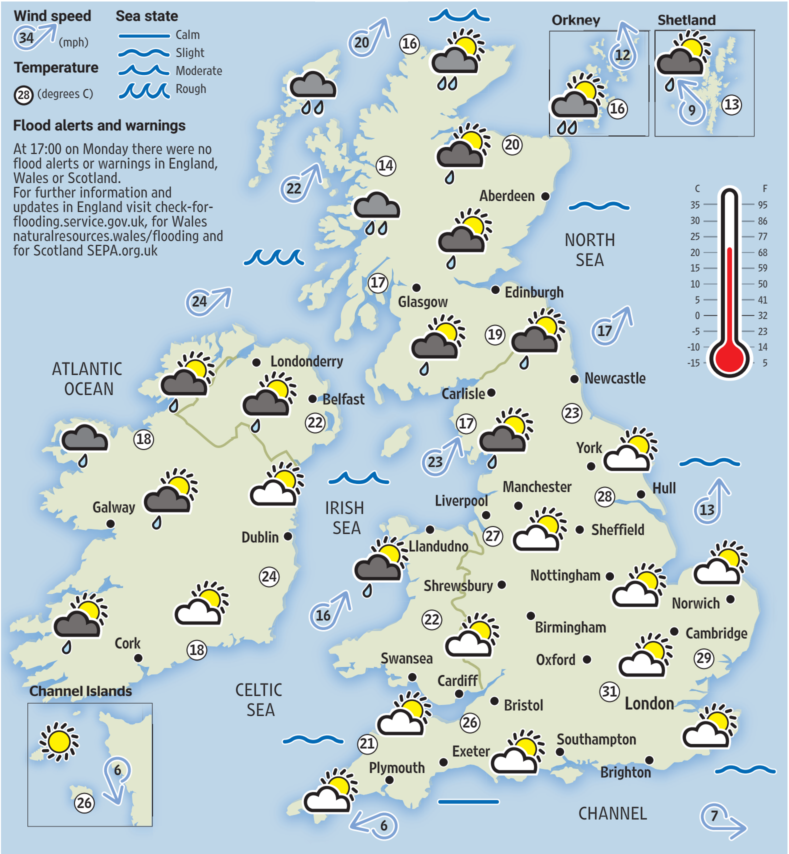


Wind speed

Temperature

Sea state

Flood alerts and warnings

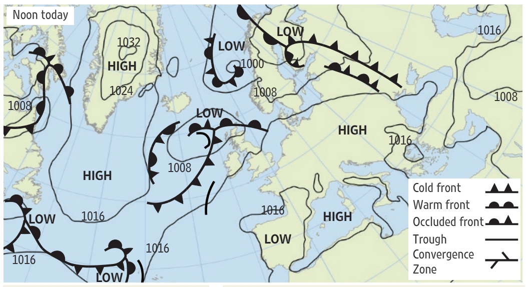
At 17:00 on Monday there were no flood alerts or warnings in England, Wales or Scotland.
For further information and updates in England visit check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk

General situation: Another hot, dry and sunny day in the south. Mainly cloudy elsewhere with showery rain, most persistent in western Scotland.
E Anglia, London, SE Eng, Cen S Eng, E Mids, E Eng: A hot and dry day after early cloud clears. Light southwesterly winds. Maximum 31C (88F), minimum 16C (61F).
N Wales, S Wales, W Mids, SW Eng, NW Eng, Cen N Eng: Cloudy with some possible showers over high terrain in the morning, otherwise dry elsewhere. Turning dry and sunnier during the afternoon. Light southwesterly winds. Maximum 27C (81F), minimum 13C (55F).
Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, N Isles: Cloudy with rain in the morning, turning dry and sunnier during the afternoon, before the risk of a shower later. Light to moderate southerly wind. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 10C (50F).
NW Scotland, Cen Highland, Glasgow, Argyll, SW Scotland: Mainly cloudy with rain, heavy at times, perhaps turning drier later. Light southerly winds, increasing to moderate or fresh southwesterly. Maximum 19C (66F), minimum 9C (48F).
Lake District, NE Eng, Borders, Republic of Ireland, N Ireland, IoM: Most areas will be cloudy with outbreaks of showery rain. Mainly dry with sunny spells in the south of Ireland. Light to moderate southwesterly winds. Maximum 22C (72F), minimum 13C (55F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	01:27	3.8	14:01	3.7
Avonmouth	07:12	11.2	19:35	11.8
Belfast	11:34	3.1	23:50	3.3
Cardiff	07:04	10.6	19:27	11.2
Devonport	05:48	4.7	18:04	5.0
Dover	11:30	6.0	23:50	6.0
Dublin	11:20	3.5	23:24	3.8
Falmouth	05:26	4.5	17:42	4.8
Greenock	--:--	--	12:45	2.9
Harwich	--:--	--	12:03	3.7
Holyhead	10:51	4.8	22:57	5.2
Hull	06:16	6.7	18:56	6.4
Leith	02:44	4.9	15:15	4.9
Liverpool	11:32	8.2	23:43	8.7
London Bridge	01:54	6.5	14:16	6.5
Lowestoft	09:42	2.4	22:31	2.3
Milford Haven	06:29	6.0	18:46	6.4
Morecambe	11:43	8.1	23:54	8.7
Newhaven	11:29	5.9	23:40	6.0
Newquay	05:21	5.8	17:38	6.2
Oban	06:06	3.3	18:25	3.6
Penzance	04:55	4.7	17:12	5.0
Portsmouth	11:57	4.3	--:--	--
Shoreham	11:37	5.5	23:46	5.6
Southampton	10:57	4.1	23:07	4.1
Swansea	06:27	8.0	18:49	8.5
Tees	03:45	5.0	16:19	4.9
Weymouth	06:53	1.6	19:10	1.9



Synoptic situation

A slight ridge of high pressure over southern Britain will bring dry, sunny and hot conditions. Low pressure centred near northern Scotland will push a warm front, followed by a cold front across northern Britain, bringing mostly cloudy conditions with outbreaks of rain, primarily in western Scotland and the north of Ireland.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Frittenden, Kent, 27.0C
Coldest: Braemar, 1.2C
Wettest: Chillingham Barns, Northumberland, 22.0mm
Sunniest: St Athan, 9.9hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 05.18
Sun sets: 20.54
Moon rises: 20.47
Moon sets: 04.42 Wed
Full moon: July 29

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	22:00-04:31
Belfast	22:02-04:59
Birmingham	21:36-04:53
Cardiff	21:37-05:02
Exeter	21:35-05:06
Glasgow	22:02-04:46
Liverpool	21:45-04:53
London	21:25-04:50
Manchester	21:42-04:50
Newcastle	21:47-04:40
Norwich	21:24-04:39
Penzance	21:41-05:17
Sheffield	21:38-04:47

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

This summer's stifling heatwaves have encouraged a big rise in the number of people turning to air conditioning at home to stay cool. But air conditioning is expensive to install, costly to run and adds to the heatwaves by drawing hot air out of buildings and dumping it outdoors.

Scientists are looking for alternatives to cool buildings, and elephants may inspire one solution to the cooling dilemma. Elephants cannot sweat to cool off. They spray themselves with water using their trunks, and this is more than just a quick shower to cool off. The elephants' thick skin is covered in wrinkles that help to trap the water, which then slowly evaporates and helps to cool them.

The elephant's wrinkly skin has now inspired a new type of cement-based building tile riddled with cracks. Water sprayed on the tiles seeps through a honeycomb network of tiny cracks in the tile that hold on to water, which evaporates slowly enough to keep the tiles cool for up to 20 hours without any need to power fans, compressors or any moving parts. Heat tests showed that the temperature under the prototype tiles stayed at a steady 32C, compared with smooth stucco tiles that reached 52C, and it is hoped that an automatic water spraying system could respond to weather forecasts to keep the tiles damp.

Another cooling technique being tested out is using materials to reflect heat. During the day, heat radiates out from the sun in the form of infrared waves, which are absorbed by buildings that become hotter and in turn release infrared waves that mostly heat up the surrounding atmosphere. Some infrared radiation can escape straight into space, however. These wavelengths can be reflected using special paints, glass or other materials to leave buildings cooler. In one test, paints using microscopic silicon and aluminium spheres cooled the surfaces of buildings by more than 5C by reflecting almost all the solar energy back into space.

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Hundred has buried the one-day game — how will England find all-format players?

Steve James

The contrast was stark. One minute Joe Root was sitting in a press conference in Cardiff explaining why he could bat sensibly in a one-day international on a tricky surface while his colleagues could not.

"One of the biggest challenges for this team — and the young guys coming through not just now, but in the next little while — is that anyone that comes into this team does not have a wealth of experience and understanding of 50-over cricket because we are not exposed to it any more," he said.

The next minute Root was playing for Welsh Fire on the same ground in the Hundred and was explaining, this time in deed not word, why power-hitting at the end of an innings is not for him. He had staged an excellent repair job, mostly allowing the brilliant New Zealander Rachin Ravindra the strike, but now he gleefully ran past one from the Afghanistan leg spinner Rashid Khan and headed off towards the dugout without even attempting to regain his ground. It was time for the power of Jordan Cox, not the touch of Root.

It was reminiscent of the old days when a county batsman might have done the same to a university spinner, having reached his century and had enough, but it was also confirmation of the difficulties of being an all-format batsman these days.

This is Root we are talking about, after all, England's finest ever in two of the formats (Tests and ODIs) and good enough to play one of England's greatest T20 innings when making an unbeaten 83 from 44 balls to beat South Africa in the 2016 World Cup.

There is not one batsman (or indeed bowler) in the top ten of the world rankings in all three formats right now. Harry Brook is the closest to that — second in Tests, 17th in ODIs and seventh in T20s — while Australia's Travis Head is first in Tests, 21st in ODIs and 13th in T20s. It is just too much to ask.

I actually think young players coming through these days need to develop two completely different techniques, one for the red-ball game and one for T20 (and the Hundred), because the requirements are so different, but that is, of course, much easier said than done and to devote equal time in practice to both methods is nigh on impossible.

And then there is the question of the 50-over game, which sits between the two and requires elements of both at varying times, but, as Root has said, is not being played domestically by England hopefuls because the Metro Bank One-Day Cup has been essentially downgraded to a development competition by its scheduling in the shadow of the Hundred.

What is interesting here, though, is that Root was among the group of batsmen that also included Jos Buttler, Ben Stokes, Alex Hales, Jason Roy and Jonny Bairstow who powered England to triumph in the 2019 World Cup but had all learnt how to play List A cricket in the 40-over format rather than 50 overs, benefiting from the decision in 2010 to prune List A county cricket from two competitions — one of 40 overs and one of 50 — to just one of 40 overs.

Before that England had produced a lot of very good List A batsmen with high averages but not such high strike rates. The slightly shorter format for four years before 50 overs was reintroduced altered that (and not playing 50-over cricket domestically was slated at the time) and there were times between 2015 and 2019 when it seemed England were treating ODIs as just elongated T20s.

You do wonder now, however, if that pendulum has swung too far and ask whether perhaps England need to rein things in a little. But they will have to learn to do that on the international stage, or in Lions matches.

It is, of course, wrong to say that our young players have no experience of 50-over cricket, because they do play a lot of it at age-group level, but I thought, just as a comparison, I would look at the formative career of India's Shubman Gill.

He is probably the best ODI batsman at present (despite being second to New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell in the official rankings), with an astonishing average a notch over 60 and a strike rate over 100 after 67 matches. Well, before his ODI debut in 2019 Gill had played 37 List A matches, either for Punjab in the Vijay Hazare Trophy or India A. That is a very decent grounding.

But while Root is 35 years old and perhaps understandably not in England's T20 side, Gill is only 26 and yet not in India's T20 outfit at the moment.

Jacob Bethell had played 16 List A matches before his ODI debut in 2024. I thought that figure might be lower, but then you look at Cox and realise he had played just four – three of them for the Lions – before his debut in the same year.

The Hundred is clearly an emotive subject and, for the record, I actually enjoy watching it. But, as pleasurable as it is to see so many young players being granted opportunities in the One-Day Trophy, as well as so many outgrounds being used, this is hardly an optimal scenario in so many ways if we really want to take ODI cricket seriously.

My colleague Mike Atherton has previously suggested playing a 50-over competition at the start of the season — as the old 55-over Benson & Hedges Cup was — but goodness knows what would be played during the Hundred then.

There are so many knock-on effects from the Hundred at the moment. For instance, there is little or no second-team cricket during this period because in these days of such small staffs, most of those players who would be involved in that are playing in the One-Day Cup.

For red-ball specialists — like Kent's Ben Compton — this is a good time to book a holiday, which is ridiculous in high summer. And the vast difference in the depletion of counties by the Hundred means that the One-Day Cup loses all credibility as a competitive entity. For instance, Surrey have lost 17 players this time (they still have a top four of Dom Sibley, Ryan Patel, Adam Thomas and Rory Burns in the One-Day Cup, mind), while Gloucestershire have lost none.

Some choose to use overseas players — it was a surprise to see the India left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav first appearing for Yorkshire — and some do not, but perhaps the ECB needs to provide a stricter lead and admit that it is only a development competition and not just permit the counties to make up their own minds about how to approach it. Perhaps ban overseas players (surely a waste of money) and insist that a certain number of players under a certain age are played in every game. There was a county under-25 one-day competition once, you know.

Maybe games could not be classed as List A then, but some clarity is surely needed. The competition has been fortunate this year in enjoying the presence of Stokes due to an unforeseen and unlikely to be repeated set of circumstances, but, looking around the scorecards and streams, there do not appear to be too many potential England white-ball players lurking there. They are mostly already in the Hundred.

Probably the most exciting of them all, Somerset's Thomas Rew, played in the One-Day Cup last year but is unlikely to do so again. He will have to learn the 50-over format, with its sharp necessity to adapt to conditions and circumstances, for the Lions and, more than likely, in the international game itself.

Little wonder that the all-format players, just Brook and Bethell among England's batsmen now, are becoming rarer. In truth it could be easier if the red-ball and white-ball sides were mostly separate — that would help the muddled coaching situation too — but, sadly, England just do not have the depth for that.

Root's touch game is not suited to power hitting in the Hundred

Results

Commonwealth Games

Glasgow *medal events only*

Artistic gymnastics: Men: Floor 1, L Whitehouse (Eng) 14.566pts; 2, R Cournoyer (Can) 13.966; 3, J Hardy (Aus) 13.433. **Pommel** 1, J Carroll (Can) 15.000; 2, R Ward (Scot) 14.966; 3, C Lynn (Scot) 13.833. **Rings** 1, Felix Dolci (Can) 13.766; 2, W Emard (Can) 13.600; 3, J Hardy (Aus) 13.500; 5, L Whitehouse (Eng) 13.100. **Women: Uneven bars** 1, K McDonald (Aus) 14.333; 2, E Black (Can) 13.900; 3, E Roper (Wales) 13.666. **Vault** 1, L-M Fontaine (Can) 14.000; 2, A Martin (Eng) 13.799; 3, Roper 13.433.

Athletics: Men: 110m hurdles 1, D Prince (Jam) 13.17sec; 2, S Bennett (Eng) 13.30; 3, M Trajkovic (Cyp) 13.32. **High jump** 1, R Beckford (Jam) 2.25m; 2, S Kushare (India) 2.25; 3, K Jack (Eng) 2.20. **Hammer** 1, E Katzberg (Can) 80.97m (Games record); 2, P Kesidis (Cyp) 76.97; 3, R Hamilton (Can) 75.36; 4, J Norris (Eng) 71.66. **3,000m steeplechase** 1, E Serem (Ken) 8min 18.23sec; 2, S Koech (Ken) 8:18.59; 3, L Bett (Ken) 8:21.63. **Women: 10,000m** 1, R Davies (Aus) 31:39.32; 2, D Wanza (Ken) 31:50.13; 3, F Niyonkuru (Rwa) 31:55.47.

Swimming: Men: Freestyle: 800m 1, S Short (Aus) 7min 39.81sec; 2, B Goedemans (Aus) 7:46.49; 3, M Galea (Aus) 7:47.10. **Breaststroke: 50m** 1, S Williamson (Aus) 26.50sec; 2, M Houlie (SA) 26.77; 3, A Ramsay-Peaty (Eng) 26.94. **Butterfly: 200m** 1, L Clareburt (NZ) 1:55.05; 2, H Turner (Aus) 1:55.38; 3, M Temple (Aus) 1:55.45. **Women: Freestyle: 100m** 1, M Harris (Aus) 52.90; 2, M O'Callaghan (Aus) 53.25; 3, S Jack (Aus) 53.38. **4 x 200m relay** 1, Australia 7:42.53; 2, England (F Colbert, A Wood, L Schlosshan, F Anderson) 7:50.10; 3, New Zealand 7:51.94. **Butterfly: 100m** 1, A Perkins (Aus) 56.38; 2, K Macinnes (Scot) 57.33; 3, E Gallagher (SA) 57.39. **Individual medley: 400m** 1, J Forrester (Aus) 4:31.19; 2, A Smith (Eng) 4:33.70; 3, E Ramsay (Aus) 4:37.12.

Weightlifting: Men: 79kg 1, E Muhammad (Malaysia) 331 (Games record); 2, V Babu (India) 330; 3, C Murray (Eng) 325. **71kg** 1, E Umoafia (Nigeria) 319pts (Games record); 2, J Tafi (Samoa) 314; 3, E Moses (Nauru) 310; 4, J Chin (Eng) 299. **Women: 58kg** 1, R Lawal (Nigeria) 229 (Games record); 2, A Taschereau (Can) 215; 3, B Sorokhaibam (India) 199; 4, E Pratt (Eng) 196. **53kg** 1, O Didih (Nigeria) 206 (Commonwealth/Games record); 2, G Yadav (India) 199; 3, R Groulx (Can) 178; 7, N Gulam (Eng) 167.

Leading medals

	G	S	B	Total
1, Australia	26	13	20	**59**
2, England	8	13	11	**32**
3, Canada	7	8	6	**21**
4, Nigeria	6	4	0	**10**
5, Scotland	5	4	2	**11**
6, South Africa	3	3	5	**11**
7, Malaysia	3	0	2	**5**
8, India	2	5	3	**10**
9, Jersey	2	0	0	**2**
10, New Zealand	1	4	3	**8**
11, Kenya	1	2	2	**5**
12, Wales	0	2	5	**7**
13=, Cyprus	0	1	1	**2**
13=, Northern Ireland	0	1	1	**2**

Cricket

The Hundred
Southern Brave v MI London
Men

Utilita Bowl (MI London won toss): MI London (4pts) beat Southern Brave by three wickets

Southern Brave		(balls)
† J Smith c Jacks b Gleeson	49	(26)
B McKinney c Pope b Boult	0	(2)
M Stoinis c Rutherford b S Curran	5	(9)
T Stubbs c Sowter b Gleeson	38	(31)
D Miller c Khan b S Curran	8	(11)
N Chaudhary c Vince b Boult	13	(9)
S Zaib c Sowter b T Curran	6	(7)
*C Jordan c Vince b T Curran	5	(3)
J Archer not out	1	(1)
L Wood run out	0	(1)
Extras (lb 1, w 3)	4	
Total (9 wkts, 100 balls)	**129**	

A Rashid did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-5, 2-36, 3-82, 4-95, 5-104, 6-122, 7-128, 8-129, 9-129.
Bowling Boult 20-13-15-2; T Curran 15-4-27-2; Gleeson 15-4-29-2; S Curran 20-4-22-2; Khan 20-8-23-0; Sowter 5-1-9-0; Jacks 5-2-3-0

MI London		(balls)
W Jacks lbw b Stoinis	54	(41)
J Vince c Stubbs b Stoinis	0	(2)
†N Pooran c Smith b Stoinis	0	(1)
*S Curran b Rashid	30	(29)
S Rutherford run out	21	(12)
T Curran b Chaudhary	7	(6)
O Pope not out	6	(4)
R Khan run out	4	(3)
T Boult not out	1	(2)
Extras (lb 3, w 4)	7	
Total (7 wkts, 100 balls)	**130**	

R Gleeson and N Sowter did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-17, 2-17, 3-82, 4-93, 5-115, 6-122, 7-127.
Bowling Archer 20-9-20-0; Wood 5-2-9-0; Stoinis 20-10-17-3; Rashid 20-5-26-1; Chaudhary 15-3-21-1; Jordan 20-4-34-0.

	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	NRR
Manchester SG	2	2	0	0	0	**8**	2.35
Welsh Fire	2	2	0	0	0	**8**	0.53
MI London	3	2	1	0	0	**8**	0.18
Trent Rockets	2	1	1	0	0	**4**	-0.13
Leeds Sunrisers	2	1	1	0	0	**4**	-0.61
B'ham Phoenix	2	1	1	0	0	**4**	-1.92
Southern Brave	3	0	3	0	0	**0**	-0.20
London Spirit	2	0	2	0	0	**0**	-0.27

Women

Utilita Bowl (MI London won toss): Southern Brave (4pts) beat MI London by one run

Southern Brave		(balls)
M Bouchier c Kerr b Matthews	31	(22)
†L Lee c Davidson-Richards b Norris	9	(7)
L Wolvaardt b Kerr	35	(30)
J Rodrigues c Kerr b Matthews	32	(22)
*S Molineux st Chathli b Matthews	4	(7)
J Grewcock c Norris b Matthews	6	(5)
I M Wong st Chathli b Carey	1	(2)
N Dattani not out	5	(3)
S Glenn not out	0	(3)
Extras (w 2, nb 1)	3	
Total (7 wkts, 100 balls)	**126**	

L Bell and M Corteen-Coleman did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-22, 2-44, 3-104, 4-112, 5-120, 6-121, 7-126.
Bowling Henry 15-5-27-0; Carey 20-8-18-1; Matthews 20-8-22-4; Norris 15-5-24-1; Kerr 20-8-21-1; Gregory 10-0-14-0.

MI London		(balls)
H Matthews b Wong	32	(28)
D Wyatt-Hodge not out	52	(42)
*H Armitage c Lee b Glenn	27	(21)
C Henry b Molineux	2	(4)
N Carey not out	8	(5)
Extras (lb 1, w 3)	4	
Total (3 wkts, 100 balls)	**125**	

A Kerr, †K Chathli, A Davidson-Richards, K Moore, T Norris and D Gregory did not bat.
Fall of wickets 1-42, 2-109, 3-112.
Bowling Bell 20-6-30-0; Molineux 20-6-22-1; Wong 20-8-20-1; Corteen-Coleman 15-3-25-0; Glenn 20-5-24-1; Grewcock 5-3-3-0.

	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	NRR
Southern Brave	3	3	0	0	0	**12**	0.25
Manchester SG	2	1	0	0	1	**6**	3.29
Trent Rockets	2	1	1	0	0	**4**	2.68
Welsh Fire	2	1	1	0	0	**4**	1.30
Leeds Sunrisers	2	1	1	0	0	**4**	0.94
London Spirit	2	1	1	0	0	**4**	-1.43
B'ham Phoenix	2	0	1	0	1	**2**	-7.77
MI London	3	0	3	0	0	**0**	-1.84

Golf

US PGA Tour 3M Open

Blaine, Minnesota: Leading final scores (United States unless stated): **259** J Koivun 64, 68, 61, 66. **262** S Scheffler 65, 70, 64, 63. **196** C Phillips 66, 65, 66, 67; D McCarthy 66, 68, 64, 66; H Matsuyama (Japan) 70, 65 65, 64; B Harman 69, 64, 66, 65.

Tennis

Citi Open

Washington: First round: Men A Tabilo (Chile) bt T Griekspoor (Neth) 7-6 (7-3), 4-6, 6-4; L Musetti (It) bt M Arnaldi (It) 6-0, 3-1 ret; T Fritz (US) bt Z Bergs (Bel) 6-3, 6-4. **Women** L Fernandez (Can) bt M Linette (Pol) 6-1, 6-4; E Cocciaretto (It) bt C Tauson (Den) 4-6, 7-6 (7-2), 7-6 (7-2); E Navarro (US) bt S Kenin (US) 6-0, 7-5.

WTA Memphis Open

First round M Joint (Aus) bt W Osuigwe (US) 6-4, 6-1; A Zakharova (Russ) bt L Fruhvirtova (Cz) 7-6 (8-6), 6-1.

Fixtures

Football

Champions League: Second qualifying round, second leg Hearts (0) v Sturm Graz (4) (7.45).

Cricket

The Hundred: Headingley Sunrisers Leeds v Manchester Super Giants (women 3.0, men 6.30).

Metro Bank Cup (11.0): **Group A: Preston** Lancashire v Kent. **Trent Bridge** Nottinghamshire v Leicestershire.

Goodwood

Rob Wright

1.50 Noble Horizon
2.25 Al Hudaiba
3.00 Witness Stand
3.35 Scandinavia
4.10 Twilight Calls
4.45 Final Objective (nap)
5.20 Proposal
5.55 Bintaryana (nb)

Going: good-good to firm in places

Draw: 5f-6f, high numbers best **Racing TV**

1.50 Coral Chesterfield Cup Handicap ITV

(£61,848: 1m 2f) (18 runners)

1	(4)	1-5405	**LIBERTY LANE** 24 (P,CD) K R Burke 6-9-12	C Lee	◆106
2	(16)	4550-0	**BOLSTER** 53 (D) Jack Morland 6-9-8	G Wood	85
3	(13)	06364-	**TORITO** 209 (B,D) J & T Gosden 6-9-7	B Sayette	102
4	(5)	4-6044	**MIDAK** 10 (D) I Williams 4-9-5	J P Spencer	102
5	(14)	101-10	**YABHER** 17 (CD) W Haggas 4-9-5	T Marquand	104
6	(2)	/00-00	**HENLEIN** 41 K Ryan 4-9-3	K Stott	97
7	(17)	03-212	**DIEGO EL QUESO** 19 (D) G M Lyons (Ire) 4-9-3	C T Keane	103
8	(15)	312-03	**WAVE RIDER** 129 (W,BF,D) G Scott 4-9-2	O Murphy	93
9	(12)	631-60	**QUAI DE BETHUNE** 17 (D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 4-9-0	J Doyle	81
10	(11)	034123	**NIGHT BREEZE** 24 (T) I Williams 6-8-12	E Greatrex	94
11	(9)	000051	**KING'S CODE** 18 (V,D) P Evans 6-8-12	J F Egan	95
12	(1)	4/00-0	**DHAHABI** 53 I Williams 8-8-12	C Bishop	58
13	(7)	-41103	**RATHGAR** 24 (P,C,D) J Channon 6-8-11	D Probert	94
14	(8)	503-01	**NOBLE HORIZON** 50 (D) Oli Rix 4-8-11	S De Sousa	94
15	(18)	020-60	**TONY MONTANA** 74 (D) K P De Foy 6-8-11	T Moore (7)	91
16	(3)	000551	**AL AALI** 11 (B,D) G Scott 4-8-10	W Buick	93
17	(10)	52-024	**PAROLE D'ORO** 19 (P,T) M Bell 4-8-10	H Crouch	94
18	(6)	1-6521	**TWISTING PHYSICS** 29 (T,D) Oliver Cole 5-8-8	Ashley Lewis (5)	91

5-1 Noble Horizon, 6-1 Yabher, 8-1 Wave Rider, Midak, 10-1 Diego El Queso, Al Aali, 12-1 Torito, Rathgar, Night Breeze, Liberty Lane.

Rob Wright's choice: Noble Horizon was most impressive when winning at Leicester; well-bred, he can defy a 10lb rise **Dangers**: Midak, Wave Rider

2.25 Coral Vintage Stakes ITV

(Group 2: 2-Y-O: £113,420: 7f) (6)

1	(5)	1U11	**AL HUDAIBA** 17 (B,D) C Appleby 9-6	W Buick	◆108
2	(2)	11	**DR RASCAL** 17 (D) Oliver Cole 9-3	Kaiya Fraser	95
3	(3)	21	**HAFFNER** 17 (D) A P O'Brien (Ire) 9-3	R L Moore	94
4	(1)	253	**PIKACHU** 17 C Johnston 9-3	D Egan	104
5	(4)	14	**RULER'S CONTROL** 41 (T) J P O'Brien (Ire) 9-3	J Doyle	87
6	(6)	11	**UNDISCOVERED** 17 (D) R Beckett 9-3	H Crouch	95

5-4 Al Hudaiba, 2-1 Haffner, 8-1 Pikachu, 10-1 Dr Rascal, 12-1 Undiscovered, Ruler's Control.

Wright choice: Al Hudaiba is quirky but won in this grade at Newmarket; can improve now fitted with blinkers for the first time **Danger**: Haffner

3.00 HKJC World Pool Lennox Stakes ITV

(Group 2: £113,420: 7f) (8)

1	(7)	331-63	**HOLGUIN** 17 (D) H Al Jehani (UAE) 6-9-6	J Doyle	104
2	(4)	200-15	**LAKE FOREST** 38 (D) W Haggas 5-9-6	C Fallon	◆119
3	(1)	310-02	**MARVELMAN** 31 (D) A Balding 4-9-6	P J McDonald	89
4	(2)	2-2530	**POET MASTER** 31 (D) K R Burke 6-9-6	C Lee	105
5	(5)	00-401	**QIRAT** 31 (T,CD) R Beckett 5-9-6	C T Keane	113
6	(8)	1-2501	**ROGUE DIPLOMAT** 41 (D) James Owen 4-9-6	H Davies	104
7	(3)	0-0026	**WITNESS STAND** 17 (P,T,BF,CD) Dr R Newland & J Insole 5-9-6	K Shoemark	112
8	(6)	0-4015	**LORD BRITAIN** 42 (T,D) I Mohammed & J Santos 3-8-13	B Sayette	107

5-4 Lake Forest, 3-1 Qirat, 9-2 Marvelman, 8-1 Witness Stand, 16-1 Rogue Diplomat, 20-1 Poet Master, Holguin, 50-1 Lord Britain.

Wright choice: Witness Stand beat Lake Forest in this a year ago; had no chance when racing much too wide at Chester last time **Dangers**: Lake Forest, Qirat

3.35 Al Shaqab Goodwood Cup Stakes ITV

(Group 1: £283,550: 2m) (8)

1	(1)	124-66	**AMILOC** 38 (C) R Beckett 4-9-12	H Crouch	116
2	(6)	50-352	**FRENCH MASTER** 38 (P,C) J & T Gosden 5-9-12	J Doyle	111
3	(7)	0-3615	**ILLINOIS** 9 A P O'Brien (Ire) 5-9-12	S M Levey	111
4	(3)	223-31	**LAZY GRIFF** 25 (P,D) C Johnston 4-9-12	O Murphy	113
5	(4)	342-10	**RAHIEBB** 40 R Varian 4-9-12	R Dawson	116
6	(2)	11-111	**SCANDINAVIA** 40 (P,CD) A P O'Brien (Ire) 4-9-12	R L Moore	◆124
7	(8)	1111-2	**TRAWLERMAN** 40 (H,C,D) J & T Gosden 8-9-12	W Buick	123
8	(5)	11-325	**MISS ALPILLES** 40 (B,C,D) E Walker 5-9-9	K Shoemark	111

10-11 Scandinavia, 2-1 Trawlerman, 10-1 Rahiebb, 14-1 Lazy Griff, 16-1 Amiloc, 20-1 French Master, 25-1 Illinois, 50-1 Miss Alpilles.

Wright choice: Scandinavia continued his winning roll in the Gold Cup at Ascot; he is still improving and will be hard to beat **Dangers:** Illinois, Raheibb

4.10 Coral Rewards Shaker Handicap ITV

(£38,655: 5f) (24)

1	(1)	-26605	**JASOUR** 10 (T,D) C Cox 5-9-12	P J McDonald	◆105
2	(17)	012004	**RUN BOY RUN** 17 (V,D) R Spencer 5-9-10	T Moore (7)	102
3	(5)	10-313	**LEXINGTON BLITZ** 52 (P,CD) R Cowell 4-9-6	E Greatrex	99
4	(21)	0416-0	**CANDY** 38 R Spencer 4-9-5	J Callan (3)	98
5	(7)	-30060	**DEMOCRACY DILEMMA** 52 (V,D) R Cowell 6-9-4	T Eaves	96
6	(4)	003160	**TOCA MADERA** 17 (D) D O'Meara 5-9-3	D Tudhope	93
7	(24)	26-000	**ADRESTIA** 17 (T,D) S & E Crisford 4-9-2	O Murphy	93
8	(14)	601-01	**GERMANIC** 185 (D) J Camacho 5-9-2	R Sexton	70
9	(8)	312100	**REGAL ENVOY** 17 (P,D) W Knight 7-9-1	Taylor Fisher	94
10	(6)	36-141	**NAANA'S SPARKLE** 23 (T,CD) Lemos Souza 4-9-0	K O'Neill	90
11	(3)	0-6660	**THE MAN** 32 (P,T,D) R Spencer 4-8-13	D Egan	85
12	(19)	506121	**TWILIGHT CALLS** 18 (V,D) R Spencer 8-8-12	S Osborne	90
13	(10)	305014	**DESERT COP** 27 (P,D) G Baker 6-8-12	B Sayette	91
14	(22)	001002	**EXCLAMATION** 25 (P,D) G Harris 3-8-12	R Dawson	95
15	(12)	13-325	**GLAMOROUS BREEZE** 17 (P,CD) C Mason 8-8-11	G Mangan	92
16	(2)	520022	**RAPPER'S DELIGHT** 18 (V,D) R Spencer 4-8-11	G Wood	90
17	(18)	100001	**ZIGGY'S TRITON** 18 (P,D) D O'Meara 4-8-11	T Marquand	89
18	(13)	00-325	**TATTERSTALL** 18 (CD) M Dods 6-8-11	C Beasley	92
19	(16)	364100	**SEVEN QUESTIONS** 32 (CD) R Cowell 5-8-10	J P Spencer	90
20	(15)	202051	**DYONISOS** 25 (D) I Williams 4-8-10	C Fallon	88
21	(9)	000023	**VINTAGE CLARETS** 45 (D) R & P Fahey 7-8-8	W Fentiman (3)	88
22	(23)	440432	**SPRING IS SPRUNG** 18 (D) P Midgley 7-8-7	M Winn	85
23	(20)	010640	**WHEELS OF FIRE** 57 (BF,D) R Hannon 4-8-5	S De Sousa	84
24	(11)	204615	**REIGNING PROFIT** 11 (B,D) R Carr 7-8-3	A Mullen	81

6-1 Lexington Blitz, 7-1 Run Boy Run, 10-1 Naana's Sparkle, Rapper's Delight, Twilight Calls, 12-1 Adrestia, 14-1 Seven Questions, Tatterstall.

Wright choice: Twilight Calls has returned to form in a visor on his past three starts; still well-in on his best form **Dangers:** Naana's Sparkle, Adrestia

4.45 British Stallion Studs EBF Maiden Stakes (Colts and Geldings) (2-Y-O: £30,924: 6f) (16)

1	(6)	52	**AGRIPPA** 10 (BF) R Hannon 9-2	P Dobbs	85
2	(2)	5	**ARD AS A ROCK** 19 P Evans 9-2	C T Keane	73
3	(12)	0	**BEACH NOIR** 25 G & J Moore 9-2	H Crouch	56
4	(1)		**DEMONSTRATE** Oliver Cole 9-2	E Greatrex	--
5	(5)		**DOES MARY KNOW** E J-Houghton 9-2	C Bishop	--
6	(8)	20	**DORIGO** 41 K Ryan 9-2	K Stott	85
7	(3)	20	**FINAL OBJECTIVE** 42 (H) H Al Jehani (UAE) 9-2	C Rodriguez	◆100
8	(14)		**GROUND FORCE** James Owen 9-2	C Fallon	--
9	(13)	3	**LAUNCH SEQUENCE** 25 K R Burke 9-2	J Doyle	77
10	(15)		**MAJOR LOOKTWICE** G & J Moore 9-2	D Probert	--
11	(10)	4	**MR RESDEV** 27 M & D Easterby 9-2	B Garritty	62
12	(7)	20	**SAVAGE MARINER** 38 H Palmer 9-2	O Murphy	72
13	(11)	0	**SEVERN COUNCILS** 11 R Hughes 9-2	R L Moore	82
14	(4)	24	**SHEMIYLA STAR** 27 (BF) C Johnston 9-2	S De Sousa	72
15	(9)	45	**WASHINGTON ROYALE** 18 M Appleby 9-2	R Havlin	67
16	(16)	0	**WOLF BAY** 19 A King 9-2	C Lee	54

2-1 Final Objective, 5-1 Dorigo, 11-2 Savage Mariner, 6-1 Severn Councils, 15-2 Launch Sequence, 10-1 Agrippa, 16-1 Washington Royale, 20-1 Shemiyla Star.

Wright choice: Final Objective has been gelded since a good seventh in the Coventry Stakes at Royal Ascot **Dangers**: Savage Mariner, Launch Sequence

5.20 Bolney English Wine Fillies' Handicap

(£25,770: 1m) (15)

1	(15)	0-5540	**BETTY CLOVER** 41 E J-Houghton 4-9-12	C Bishop	◆97
2	(4)	30-414	**NANINO NIYATI** 17 Owen Burrows 4-9-8	C Rodriguez	89
3	(10)	31-100	**JUST CALL ME ANGEL** 39 (D) E Dunlop 3-9-7	R Havlin	78
4	(14)	124-15	**RUMBA NUMBA** 41 (D) R Varian 4-9-7	J Mitchell	88
5	(12)	11-225	**SONG N DANCE** 17 (D) S Woods 4-9-3	D Egan	83
6	(2)	1/2-06	**ELECTRIFARHH** 57 (H,D) E Walker 4-9-1	K Shoemark	63
7	(3)	-40111	**ANNASTARZY** 26 (CD) R Hannon 3-8-13	J Leavy	88
8	(5)	335-02	**VIXEY** 17 (D) S G West 6-8-12	A Brookes	79
9	(1)	232-	**STAR MIRAGE** 221 H Al Jehani (UAE) 3-8-8	J P Spencer	85
10	(9)	2-12	**SI GRASS** 167 (D) C Johnston 3-8-7	S De Sousa	89
11	(6)	-52511	**CRAZEE ICON** 17 (D) A Balding 3-8-5	R Dawson	80
12	(7)	504-44	**ATLANTIS BLUE** 26 (D) G Baker 7-8-5	L Morris	85
13	(11)	0-21	**WID** 19 (D) R Beckett 3-8-5	E Greatrex	80
14	(13)	542-14	**PROPOSAL** 66 (BF) W Haggas 3-8-2	S Osborne	77
15	(8)	33-2	**PERDY IN PARIS** 83 (T) G Baker 3-8-2	K O'Neill	86

9-2 Rumba Numba, 11-2 Annastarzy, 6-1 Wid, 7-1 Crazee Icon, 8-1 Nanino Niyati, 10-1 Si Grass, Star Mirage, 12-1 Proposal.

Wright choice: Proposal was unsuited by a slow early pace at Windsor; she remains unexposed over this distance **Dangers**: Crazee Icon, Annastarzy

5.55 World Pool Bet With The Tote EBF Fillies' Handicap (£25,770: 6f) (21)

1	(15)	44-010	**CINQUE VERDE** 66 (D) A Carroll 6-9-12	D Egan	95
2	(11)	32-000	**HOLD A DREAM** 18 (P,D) C Cox 4-9-10	P J McDonald	97
3	(18)	26-045	**STORMY IMPACT** 31 (D) R & P Fahey 4-9-8	W Fentiman (3)	90
4	(2)	3-2005	**CINDY LOU WHO** 29 (D) A Carroll 4-9-7	W Carson	◆99
5	(8)	16-106	**GOLD DIGGER** 24 (P,T,D) R Spencer 3-9-4	S Osborne	94
6	(1)	-05154	**BEAUJOLAIS NOUVEAU** 21 (P,D) B Haslam 4-9-3	A Mullen	87
7	(21)	262301	**FLEETWATER** 28 (D) J S Moore 4-9-0	Taylor Fisher	83
8	(9)	6112	**MACHADADORP** 17 (BF) A Balding 3-9-0	O Murphy	86
9	(7)	351P-1	**SING THE BLUES** 11 (CD) Martin Dunne 3-8-11	C Fallon	85
10	(12)	-21044	**RUBY'S ANGEL** 17 (D) H Palmer 3-8-11	D Probert	86
11	(14)	053064	**ANGEL SHARED** 11 (D) Steph Hollinshead 5-8-10	C Lee	84
12	(10)	233202	**SHALLOW** 11 (V,D) R Spencer 5-8-10	G Wood	79
13	(3)	3-1141	**SECRET HISTORY** 17 (H,D) E Walker 3-8-9	Ashley Lewis (5)	83
14	(19)	1-1432	**ZIGHY** 29 (P,BF,D) G Boughey 3-8-8	J Callan (3)	82
15	(6)	100-61	**ROGUE ATTRACTION** 19 (P,D) E Bethell 3-8-8	H Davies	82
16	(17)	423-11	**ZEN DIVA** 17 (D) R Beckett 3-8-7	S De Sousa	81
17	(5)	-24114	**PARADISE WALK** 4 (B,D) R Beckett 3-8-6	E Greatrex	79
18	(13)	5-1221	**BINTARYANA** 46 (D) W Knight 3-8-5	L Morris	79
19	(4)	512342	**DIAMONT KATIE** 28 (D) K R Burke 4-8-5	J Nicholls (3)	73
20	(16)	431133	**POLKA BLUE** 17 (D) C Hills 3-8-3	K O'Neill	78
21	(20)	020222	**WOOHOO** 11 (BF,D) J Goldie 5-8-2	Lauren Young (5)	70

13-2 Bintaryana, 7-1 Zen Diva, 8-1 Paradise Walk, 10-1 Secret History, Gold Digger, Machadadorp, 12-1 Sing The Blues, 16-1 others.

Wright choice: Bintaryana showed a good attitude to win a competitive race at York; she is open to further progress **Dangers**: Zighy, Paradise Walk

Scandinavia can make it seven in row

Rob Wright Racing Editor

Scandinavia has developed into the dominant stayer over the past 12 months and he is difficult to oppose in the Al Shaqab Goodwood Cup (3.35) today as he seeks a seventh straight win.

Aidan O'Brien's charge proved too good for stablemate Illinois in this race 12 months ago and has improved since then, beating Rahiebb in the St Leger at Doncaster in September before claiming a third top-flight success in the Gold Cup at Royal Ascot last month.

Scandinavia was forced to pull out all the stops to beat Trawlerman at Ascot, prevailing by a head after a sustained duel that saw the pair pull nine lengths clear of third-placed Sweet William. He is not flashy, rarely winning by a wide margin, but has the winning habit and can keep his streak going.

The quirky **Al Hudaiba** was coaxed to a narrow success by William Buick in group two company at Newmarket and can follow up in the Coral Vintage Stakes (2.25). He looked a tricky ride for most of that race but is fitted with blinkers for the first time here, which should help him to concentrate, and he can see off the O'Brien-trained Haffner.

The HKJC World Pool Lennox Stakes (3.00) can go to **Witness Stand** for a second time. He beat Lake Forest in this race 12 months ago and can be forgiven a below-par effort at Chester last time as he raced much wider than ideal. He can bounce back to form.

Beverley

Rob Wright

1.35 Little She
2.10 Head Girl
2.45 Lexington Boom
3.20 Apulia Bay
3.55 Carolus Magnus
4.30 Golden Havana

Going: good to firm-good in places

Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best **Racing TV**

1.35 Handicap (£3,800: 1m 2f) (8)

1	(8)	21-60	**SANDRET** 29 (D) S England 10-11-2	Rebecca Hitchen (5)
2	(4)	50122	**PERFIDIA** 10 (P,BF) T Easterby 4-11-1	T Easterby (3)
3	(3)	33060	**STIPULATION** 24 (P,D) M Loughnane 5-11-0	J Loughnane (7)
4	(5)	04442	**SUNNY ORANGE** 14 (P,C) T Easterby 6-10-12	Miss A Collier
5	(7)	20002	**ALAZWAR** 43 (D) A Watson 8-10-10	Miss B Hampson
6	(1)	53053	**STAR START** 14 (CD) R Carr 6-10-8	Miss C Parker (5)
7	(6)	65325	**LITTLE SHE** 28 (T) M Tregoning 4-10-2	Miss A Tregoning (5)
8	(2)	003U6	**THE PUG** 7 (P,D) O Murphy 6-9-13	J Myers (7)

5-2 Perfidia, 7-2 Sunny Orange, 5-1 Alazwar, Star Start, 6-1 Little She, 16-1 The Pug, Sandret, Stipulation.

2.10 Handicap (£4,004: 1m 4f) (7)

1	(4)	-5650	**PORTER'S SONG** 50 L Bailey 4-9-12	J Garritty
2	(3)	0/000	**CHARACTER TESTING** J13 (T,V) M Walford 5-9-12	K S McHugh (7)
3	(1)	60-23	**LA TRINITE** 22 N King 4-9-6	D Costello
4	(6)	-0060	**BLACKWATER LILLY** J13 (P) N King 6-9-5	P Mulrennan
5	(2)	/00-6	**RULER OF THE RIVER** 13 (P,T) P Kirby 6-9-3	B McHugh
6	(5)	26565	**TALKING IN KODE** 9 (V) E Bethell 3-9-1	C Horgan (5)
7	(7)	0-030	**HEAD GIRL** 27 (P) J Portman 3-8-12	J Hart

13-8 La Trinite, 4-1 Head Girl, 9-2 Talking In Kode, 13-2 Porter's Song, 15-2 Blackwater Lilly, 10-1 Character Testing, 25-1 Ruler Of The River.

2.45 Stakes (2-Y-O: £4,860: 5f) (14)

1	(13)	03	**BLACK VELVET BOY** 8 J & S Quinn 9-7	J Hart
2	(11)		**CLASSY JAGUAR** T Coyle & K Wood 9-7	D Costello
3	(14)	000	**DAVE'S MATEY** 9 T Easterby 9-7	D Fentiman
4	(1)	0	**DESERT OUTLAW** 27 P Midgley 9-7	D Nolan
5	(3)	2	**LEXINGTON BOOM** 28 G Tuer 9-7	O Stammers
6	(7)	23	**MAXIMUS MERIDIUS** 11 D Loughnane 9-7	R Scott
7	(5)	00	**MR DE MAGGS** 13 T Culhane & S Barclay 9-7	A Jary (3)
8	(12)	00	**ANGEL STEPS** 36 P Midgley 9-2	B McHugh
9	(9)	5	**AVA LOUISE** 36 P McBride 9-2	E Tindall (5)
10	(4)	4	**DOROTHEA HOPE** 8 T Easterby 9-2	D Allan
11	(8)	422	**ELEVEN EIGHTY TWO** 22 (BF) B Haslam 9-2	P Mulrennan
12	(2)		**MALULEE** M Dods 9-2	S B Kirrane
13	(10)	6	**NOCCALULA FALLS** 27 P Midgley 9-2	C Hardie
14	(6)		**PURRISTA** G Tutty 9-2	Joanna Mason

5-2 Eleven Eighty Two, 11-4 Maximus Meridius, 4-1 Lexington Boom, 8-1 Dorothea Hope, Black Velvet Boy, 16-1 Malulee, Purrista, Noccalula Falls.

3.20 Stakes (2-Y-O: £6,480: 7f) (4)

1	(3)	3	**APULIA BAY** 22 S & E Crisford 9-7	O Orr
2	(1)		**GIANT DAN BURN** C Johnston 9-7	R Scott
3	(4)	402	**ROMANZA** 22 C Fellowes 9-7	P Bradley
4	(2)	4	**VEGA KING** 15 K R Burke 9-7	S James

13-8 Romanza, 9-4 Apulia Bay, 4-1 Giant Dan Burn, Vega King.

3.55 Handicap (£4,527: 7f) (8)

1	(3)	0-261	**CAROLUS MAGNUS** 36 (D) M & D Easterby 8-9-12	Joanna Mason
2	(4)	4-010	**NAPOLIAN** 18 D O'Meara 3-9-9	D Nolan
3	(6)	61352	**MASABAN** 20 (BF) E Bethell 3-9-8	O Orr
4	(7)	60312	**NORCROSS BROW** 19 (BF,D) Charlie Clover 3-9-6	J Hart
5	(5)	0-600	**LADY HORNBLOWER** 67 (W,CD) J O'Keeffe 3-9-4	J Garritty
6	(2)	456-5	**DUMFRIES** 14 (CD) R Carr 6-9-3	JP Sullivan
7	(8)	00505	**WILLOWINGHURN** 28 (D) D O'Meara 3-8-10	R Scott
8	(1)	64052	**WALK ON WALK ON** 24 (P) N Wilson 3-8-5	E Tindall (5)

11-4 Carolus Magnus, 100-30 Norcross Brow, 4-1 Masaban, 11-2 Walk On Walk On, 10-1 Napolian, 12-1 Dumfries, Willowinghurn, 14-1 Lady Hornblower.

4.30 Handicap (£4,527: 5f) (9)

1	(6)	40321	**AZUINTHEJUNGLE** 15 (CD) N Tinkler 4-9-13	A Jary (3)
2	(3)	0-450	**LE BEAU GARCON** 42 (CD) M & D Easterby 7-9-13	Joanna Mason
3	(4)	02206	**JOJO RABBIT** 42 (CD) R Carr 8-9-11	JP Sullivan
4	(7)	2-000	**SPEEDING BULLET** 55 P Midgley 5-9-10	D Nolan
5	(9)	10406	**EMPRESS OLIVIA** 12 M Walford 3-9-9	J Garritty
6	(5)	43322	**GOLDEN HAVANA** 8 (V,D) M Dods 3-9-6	S B Kirrane
7	(2)	15001	**OPAL STORM** 8 (P,T,CD) B Rothwell 6-9-4(5ex)	F McManoman
8	(1)	0-211	**CRAFTY SPIRIT** 14 (B,CD) J Wainwright 5-9-0	B McHugh
9	(8)	30400	**WITHOUT FLAW** 14 (BF,CD) Miss T Jackson 5-8-13	C Hardie

11-4 Crafty Spirit, 7-2 Azuinthejungle, 5-1 Opal Storm, 11-2 Golden Havana, 10-1 Without Flaw, Jojo Rabbit, 12-1 others.

Yarmouth

Rob Wright

2.35 Educator
3.10 Mithaaly
3.45 Luminous Warrior
4.20 Divot
4.55 Churchill's Spirit
5.25 Methgal

Going: good to firm

Draw: no advantage **Sky Sports Racing**

2.35 Handicap (£4,397: 1m 6f) (3)

1	(1)	03050	**EXPRESSIONLESS** 15 (P,CD) D Cunha 6-9-5	S Donohoe
2	(3)	30023	**EDUCATOR** 15 (B) Miss H Knight 7-9-5	B Loughnane
3	(2)	0-066	**BALTIC** 23 (B,T,C) L Wadham 6-9-4	S D Bowen

2-7 Educator, 5-1 Expressionless, 7-1 Baltic.

3.10 Stakes (2-Y-O: £7,020: 7f) (6)

1	(6)		**MAJESTIC JUDE** W Haggas 9-7	D Keenan
2	(1)	2	**MITHAALY** 15 G Boughey 9-7	B Loughnane
3	(4)		**MOHEEBB** J Butler 9-7	N Callan
4	(5)		**NOBLE PRINCE** C Appleby 9-7	C Planas
5	(2)	502	**NOTE TO SELF** 15 J & T Gosden 9-7	L Catton (3)
6	(3)		**ROCKET BOY** M Botti 9-7	M Ghiani

2-1 Mithaaly, 9-4 Note To Self, 7-2 Noble Prince, 6-1 Majestic Jude, 12-1 Rocket Boy, 25-1 Moheebb.

3.45 Handicap (£3,768: 1m) (7)

1	(5)	00062	**LUMINOUS WARRIOR** 26 (T,D) D Cunha 4-9-9	M Ghiani
2	(3)	20001	**LOVE YOU MORE** 15 (H,D) J Parr 4-9-7	B Loughnane
3	(2)	2-603	**CHLOE'S COURAGE** 11 (P) J Ryan 4-9-5	D Keenan
4	(1)	50505	**TURPIN** 15 (V) J Boyle 4-9-3	P Cosgrave
5	(4)	5-625	**HEER'S SADIE** 20 (CD) J & S Birkett 8-9-0	C Howarth (3)
6	(7)	00006	**ROCK MASTER** 6 (P) A Carroll 4-9-0	Millie Wonnacott (5)
7	(6)	0000-	**EAGLE LANDED** 270 J R Jenkins 5-9-0	J Peate

6-4 Love You More, 9-4 Luminous Warrior, 5-1 Chloe's Courage, 6-1 Turpin, 12-1 Heer's Sadie, 20-1 Rock Master, 66-1 Eagle Landed.

4.20 Handicap (£3,768: 1m 2f) (6)

1	(4)	23501	**DIVOT** 20 (CD) W Knight 4-9-9	M Ghiani
2	(6)	005-0	**WITHOUTFURTHERADO** 83 (P) P Charalambous & J Clutterbuck 4-9-8	L Wright (5)
3	(3)	35414	**NUPTOWN GIRL** 25 (P) I Williams 4-9-7	B Loughnane
4	(5)	-1004	**PRIDE EYE** 24 (T) M Rimell 4-9-1	C Howarth (3)
5	(1)	06142	**DINAH MYTE** 24 J Gallagher 4-8-12	D Keenan
6	(2)	60005	**PURE THEORY** 20 (P) Stephanie Cassidy 4-8-9	Rose Dawes (5)

8-11 Divot, 11-4 Dinah Myte, 8-1 Nuptown Girl, 10-1 Pride Eye, 16-1 Withoutfurtherado, 33-1 Pure Theory.

4.55 Stakes (£3,454: 1m 3f 104yd) (7)

1	(4)	-5062	**CHARENCEY** 7 (P,T) I Williams 6-9-9	B Loughnane
2	(7)	32151	**NYMPHAEA** 7 (P) J Candlish 4-9-9	J Fernandes (7)
3	(3)	33432	**STINTINO SUNSET** 27 (B,H,D) J & S Birkett 6-9-9	D E Hogan
4	(2)	00644	**TWILIGHT GUEST** 5 (P) G Margarson 6-9-9	H Burns (3)
5	(1)	5U345	**WRIST ART** 24 (T,V) James Owen 9-9-9	C Howarth (3)
6	(6)	06-43	**CHURCHILL'S SPIRIT** 21 (B) Tom Clover 3-8-13	Laura Pearson
7	(5)	40603	**FLETCHER** 13 J Boyle 3-8-13	P Cosgrave

5-2 Nymphaea, 11-4 Charencey, 9-2 Stintino Sunset, 15-2 Churchill's Spirit, Wrist Art, 8-1 Fletcher, 14-1 Twilight Guest.

5.25 Handicap (£3,768: 7f) (9)

1	(8)	35630	**NOBLE GUEST** 23 (CD) G Margarson 4-10-2	H Burns (3)
2	(5)	43251	**THAPA VC** 10 (B,T,CD) M Rimell 8-10-2	B Loughnane
3	(9)	10315	**RUSHEEN BOY** 33 (T,CD) J & S Birkett 5-10-1	D E Hogan
4	(6)	00404	**WAY TO DUBAI** 27 M Appleby 7-10-0	D Keenan
5	(2)	20040	**METHGAL** 28 (T,D) D Cunha 4-9-9	M Ghiani
6	(1)	33-50	**MINSHAAR** 146 (D) Stephanie Cassidy 4-9-8	L Wright (5)
7	(3)	25623	**ORANGE EMPEROR** 31 J Fanshawe 3-9-8	J Peate
8	(7)	5-600	**MAYFAIR MARKET** 22 (T) S Woods 3-9-6	D Muscutt
9	(4)	406-4	**EL CARRUSEL** 11 (P) J Ryan 3-8-6	Alice Bond (5)

2-1 Thapa VC, 4-1 Way To Dubai, 11-2 Orange Emperor, 7-1 Noble Guest, Rusheen Boy, 8-1 Methgal, 16-1 Mayfair Market, 25-1 Minshaar, El Carrusel.

Ffos Las

Rob Wright

6.00 Drum Major
6.30 Sofian
7.00 Knightmare
7.30 Summerson
8.00 Pureis King
8.30 Legendsoftheland

Going: good-good to firm in places

Draw: 5f-6f, high numbers best

Sky Sports Racing

6.00 Nursery (2-Y-O: £3,454: 7f) (10)

1	(4)	0523	**PARADING** 21 R Hughes 9-9	F Marsh
2	(5)	050	**CUTLASS** 15 B Meehan 9-9	J Watson
3	(3)	0226	**DREAM ON KENT** 24 (V) P Evans 9-9	R Kavanagh (3)
4	(7)	6333	**JAZZY BAY** 20 E J-Houghton 9-7	C Hutchinson
5	(9)	554	**ARIANE SKY** 59 James Owen 9-4	M Paetel (5)
6	(2)	005	**TEN YEAR STRETCH** 20 J Osborne 9-4	W Carver
7	(10)	050	**CLEAR HORIZON** 19 J Portman 9-0	R Hornby
8	(1)	00605	**DRUM MAJOR** 14 (P) W Muir & C Grassick 8-13	L Edmunds
9	(6)	05454	**MAGICAL LIFE** 14 J S Moore 8-8	W Cox
10	(8)	000	**EMIRATES EXPRESS** 33 Jack Morland 8-3	Olivia Haines (7)

7-2 Parading, 4-1 Jazzy Bay, 13-2 Cutlass, 7-1 Ariane Sky, Magical Life, 8-1 Dream On Kent, 10-1 Clear Horizon, Ten Year Stretch.

6.30 Handicap (£4,187: 7f) (5)

1	(4)	5U-33	**DISTINCT SPIRIT** 5 (BF,D) D & C Kubler 6-10-2	E Nader
2	(2)	4010	**NAME THE DAY** 11 (T,D) E J-Houghton 3-9-9	C Hutchinson
3	(1)	06-04	**DECALOGUE** 4 J Osborne 3-9-6	W Carver
4	(5)	24021	**FLYTA** 29 (T,CD) M Loughnane 3-9-4	R Hornby
5	(3)	12-06	**SOFIAN** 28 (CD) Mrs N Evans 4-9-2	R Kavanagh (3)

11-8 Distinct Spirit, 7-4 Flyta, 11-2 Decalogue, 10-1 Name The Day, 12-1 Sofian.

7.00 Stakes (£3,454: 1m) (8)

1	(4)	52221	**KNIGHTMARE** 4 (B,D) P Evans 4-10-0	R Kavanagh (3)
2	(2)	46300	**CEZARRO** 13 M Young 4-9-9	R Hornby
3	(8)	00040	**CREATE** 12 (P,D) S Dixon 6-9-9	T Heard
4	(7)	04400	**KEEPER OF SECRETS** 15 (P) I Williams 5-9-9	J Watson
5	(3)	4452U	**KING OF THE DANCE** 12 (P,D) B J Llewellyn & R Williams 7-9-9	A Egan (7)
6	(5)	16004	**LHEBAYEB** 22 (P,D) R J Price 8-9-9	L Edmunds
7	(1)	04020	**MOORETOWN LAD** 35 A Wintle 6-9-9	F Marsh
8	(6)	000R0	**PROPHET SQUEEZE** 4 (H) B J Murphy (Ire) 8-9-9	E Nader

7-4 Knightmare, 4-1 King of The Dance, 11-2 Mooretown Lad, 6-1 Create, 8-1 Lhebayeb, 14-1 Cezarro, Keeper Of Secrets, Prophet Squeeze.

7.30 Stakes (£6,480: 1m 4f) (4)

1	(3)	0-3	**CRACKING BEAUTY** 20 R Teal 3-9-2	L Edmunds
2	(1)	44	**KHEPRI** 21 K R Burke 3-9-2	P-L Jamin
3	(2)	24	**SEACOLE** 20 R Beckett 3-9-2	R Clutterbuck
4	(4)	22	**SUMMERSON** 18 (H) R Varian 3-9-2	R P Downey

7-4 Cracking Beauty, 5-2 Summerson, 100-30 Seacole, 4-1 Khepri.

8.00 Handicap (£3,454: 1m 4f) (9)

1	(2)	03-31	**ZARAQUELLE** 7 (T) James Owen 4-9-10(5ex)	M Paetel (5)
2	(8)	-6263	**TROJAN TRUTH** 14 (B,D) E De Giles 7-9-9	O Lewis (5)
3	(4)	404	**NOBLE GRACE** 44 W Greatrex 5-9-8	R Hornby
4	(7)	00211	**PUREIS KING** 33 (C,D) Faye Bramley 4-9-7	C Hutchinson
5	(9)	40130	**BOBBY DASSLER** 20 (H) B J Murphy (Ire) 7-9-4	E Nader
6	(1)	20-22	**JUST ADAIR** 27 (T,BF) J & A O'Neill 4-9-2	J Watson
7	(3)	64134	**VIRTUAL HUG** 45 (T,D) Mrs N Evans 8-9-1	R Kavanagh (3)
8	(6)	06013	**BUCK BARROW** 29 (P,CD) A Wintle 4-9-0	F Marsh
9	(5)	00000	**MINERS CABIN** 26 Kevin Coleman (Ire) 4-8-9	P-L Jamin

5-2 Zaraquelle, 7-2 Pureis King, 9-2 Just Adair, 7-1 Virtual Hug, 10-1 Buck Barrow, 12-1 Trojan Truth, Miners Cabin, Bobby Dassler, 16-1 Noble Grace.

8.30 Handicap (£3,454: 6f) (10)

1	(4)	44204	**HONOUR YOUR DREAMS** 21 (T,D) M Attwater 6-9-9	R Clutterbuck
2	(1)	21213	**LEGENDSOFTHELAND** 45 (D) A Wintle 4-9-9	F Marsh
3	(6)	1-600	**BARRY THE WORM** 30 (P,D) E Smyth-Osbourne 3-9-4	A Rawlinson
4	(7)	00-00	**HAWORTH STAR** 32 (H,D) M Young 6-9-3	R Hornby
5	(8)	00060	**DIAMONDSINTHESAND** 43 (H,CD) A Wintle 9-9-2	Taryn Langley (5)
6	(9)	-4560	**SMASHER** 146 (P,T,D) M Attwater 6-9-2	K Fox
7	(2)	40005	**MACARONE** 31 (D) G Harris 5-9-1	T Heard
8	(5)	00605	**MY MATE BEATTIE** 37 (P) S Dixon 4-9-0	M Mortensen (5)
9	(3)	03043	**SYMBOL OF HOPE** 13 (P,D) G Harris 8-9-0	R Kavanagh (3)
10	(10)	000-0	**APLACEINTHESUN** 90 Ollie Sangster 3-8-13	P-L Jamin

5-2 Legendsoftheland, 3-1 Symbol of Hope, 7-1 My Mate Beattie, 8-1 Diamondsinthesand, 10-1 Macarone, Honour Your Dreams, 12-1 others.

Yesterday's racing results

Ayr

Going: Good to Firm (good in places)

2.15 (7f 50yd) 1, **Bymiddaytomorrow** (K Shoemark, 9-4); 2, Kanzi (9-1); 3, Tegernsee (7-1). 5 ran. 1½l, 1¼l. E Walker.

2.45 (6f) 1, **Mr Cool** (Connor Beasley, 7-2); 2, Great Profit (17-2); 3, Lanarra (12-1). 9 ran. 1¼l, sh. C Johnston.

3.15 (7f 50yd) 1, **Imperial Guard** (Connor Beasley, 13-8); 2, Abduction (9-2); 3, Carmel Valley (12-1). 5 ran. NR: Roaring Ralph. ns, 1l. M Dods.

3.45 (1m) 1, **Samra Star** (Mark Winn, 25-1); 2, Runninsonofagun (8-15 fav); 3, Union Island (12-1). 9 ran. nk, 2l. Miss L A Perratt.

4.15 (1m 2f) 1, **Empirical** (K Shoemark, 5-2); 2, Colourband (2-1); 3, Geo (8-1). 5 ran. NR: Obito. 1l, 1¼l. E Walker.

4.45 (5f) 1, **Sixcor** (Tom Kiely-Marshall, 11-1); 2, Startling (4-1); 3, Henery Hawk (7-1). 8 ran. NR: Supremissy. ½l, nk. Miss L A Perratt.

5.20 (1m 2f) 1, **Royal Blaze** (Greg Fairley, 3-1); 2, Falcon Nine (4-1); 3, Penelope's Sister (7-2). 9 ran. NR: Annandale, Lightning Galaxy, Recobella, Zebra Star. nk, 37½l. Ewan Whillans.

Placepot: £52.60

Quadpot: £9.50

Southwell

Going: Standard

2.30 (1m 6f 21yd) 1, **Flash Kozo** (Kaiya Fraser, 9-4); 2, Desert Belle (11-4); 3, Glenna (2-1). 9 ran. 1¼l, ¾l. Harry Eustace.

3.00 (1m 4f 14yd) 1, **Kokbastau** (Ray Dawson, 11-4); 2, Turret (9-2); 3, Humphrey (5-4 fav). 14 ran. nk, 3½l. R Varian.

3.30 (1m 3f 23yd) 1, **Roc De Fer** (L Morris, 7-4 fav); 2, James Choice (7-1); 3, Prince Of Calypso (12-1). 14 ran. 1½l, nk. Sir Mark Prescott.

4.00 (1m 13yd) 1, **Filly Eilish** (S De Sousa, 16-1); 2, Venetian Lion (100-30); 3, Kiani King (9-4). 13 ran. ½l, 2¼l. I Furtado.

4.30 (7f 14yd) 1, **Roosike** (H Crouch, 13-2); 2, Rising Tiger (8-15 fav); 3, Bullrider (3-1). 12 ran. nk, 17½l. R Hughes.

5.00 (7f 14yd) 1, **Storm Free** (H Crouch, 7-2 fav); 2, Chalk Mountain (4-1); 3, Spaceman (4-1). 12 ran. ½l, ½l. J Tate.

5.30 (7f 14yd) 1, **King Of Fury** (Sean Kirrane, 12-1); 2, Korbut (12-1); 3, Shaman Champion (13-2). 10 ran. NR: Comic Hero. nk, sh. M Dods.

6.05 (6f 16yd) 1, **Modern Times** (L Morris, 2-1); 2, Pickersgill (22-1); 3, Belsito (12-1). 12 ran. NR: D Flawless. ½l, ½l. James Owen.

Placepot: £3.60

Quadpot: £3.00

Ripon

Going: Good to Firm (good in places)

6.00 (1m 1f 170yd) 1, **Riddikulus** (Rhys Elliott, 5-2); 2, Balmoral Boy (14-1); 3, Lc Tiffen (100-1). 7 ran. 17½l, 3l. Grant Tuer.

6.30 (6f) 1, **Pure Mint** (Harry Davies, 11-10 fav); 2, Green Bay Dream (33-1); 3, Reflect On Glory (8-1). 7 ran. 4½l, ½l. S & E Crisford.

7.05 (1m) 1, **Prosperity** (C Lee, 4-6 fav); 2, Princess Honey Bee (8-1); 3, Fractional (2-1). 5 ran. 17½l, 37½l. K R Burke.

7.40 (6f) 1, **Paper View** (Joe Leavy, 5-2); 2, Harley (9-4 fav); 3, Aura Of Melania (14-1). 6 ran. 1¼l, ns. R Hannon.

8.10 (1m) 1, (, fav); 2, Noelan Star (11-4). 5 ran. NR: Enchant. sh.

8.40 (5f) 1, **Zuffolo** (Rhys Elliott, 7-2); 2, Doralee (15-2); 3, Cheerleader (5-2). 6 ran. hd, hd. M Dods.

Placepot: £83.40

Quadpot: £17.50

Windsor

Going: Good to Firm

5.15 (5f 21yd) 1, **Too Darn Good** (Taryn Langley, 11-1); 2, Moe's Legacy (5-1); 3, Merrimack (4-1). 11 ran. ½l, sh. H Candy.

5.50 (1m 2f) 1, **Ziata** (Rossa Ryan, 9-2); 2, Lucy The Wire (6-5 fav); 3, Sweet Horizon (7-4). 5 ran. sh, 2½l. G Tutty.

6.20 (6f 12yd) 1, **Harry Knows** (Oisin Murphy, 4-7 fav); 2, Down To You Kid (15-8); 3, Rex Regum (50-1). 7 ran. 4¼l, ¾l. R Hughes.

6.53 (6f 12yd) 1, **Madman** (Jack Callan, 11-2); 2, Solar Invincible (5-1); 3, Forever Glamorous (11-4). 6 ran. 1l, ¾l. R Cook & J Bridger.

7.28 (6f 12yd) 1, **Another Abbot** (P J Dobbs, 4-1); 2, Sudden Flight (4-1); 3, Regional Rock (15-2). 13 ran. NR: Uncle Don. ¾l, ¾l. W J Haggas.

8.00 (1m 31yd) 1, **Berlinetta** (George Bass, 11-2); 2, Eazy On The Eye (4-1); 3, Box Clever (10-1). 8 ran. NR: Toralou. sh, 1l. J Channon.

8.30 (1m 2f) 1, **Give Me Sun** (Benoit D L Sayette, 6-1); 2, Takeitorleaveit (9-4); 3, Time To Sparkle (2-1). 4 ran. NR: My Old Mate. P Owens.

Placepot: £87.40

Quadpot: £13.80

Borthwick has hooker problem and must act now to fix it

Reliance on George and Cowan-Dickie is huge risk and it may be time for a wild-card option, writes **Charlie Morgan**

Kepu Tuipulotu
Jamie George
Theo Dan

Over the Christmas of 2023, as everyone involved with the England set-up sat back and reflected on the World Cup and pondered their way forward for the new four-year cycle, the hooker position would have been high on the priority list.

Jamie George had just grafted through an immense workload out in France, playing all 80 minutes of England's last pool game against Samoa before the entirety of the quarter-final against Fiji and the semi-final against South Africa. Theo Dan did start the third-place play-off, yet was not backed when the stakes were higher.

With Luke Cowan-Dickie recovering from nerve damage in his neck, the issue had also been apparent during the 2023 Six Nations. George was on the pitch for 392 of the 400 minutes that comprised Steve Borthwick's maiden campaign as England head coach. Poor Jack Walker did see 20 minutes from the bench as France ransacked Twickenham but George did not come off. Walker arrived in the second half of that 53-10 thrashing, filling in at flanker initially before finishing up in the back line. His experience was emblematic of a gruesome afternoon.

England name their party for the 2027 World Cup in about 13 months' time. They have only nine Test matches — four during the second block of the Nations Championship and then another Six Nations — until the World Cup warm-ups. And, though Borthwick is doing a decent job of regenerating the rest of the squad, these past few weeks have not endorsed hooker depth. George started all three games with Cowan-Dickie replacing him in the second half of each one. Dan was the third hooker in Borthwick's touring group and did not feature at all.

Since the beginning of 2024, George has started 22 of England's 32 Test matches. The 35-year-old, due to retire at the end of next season, has accumulated 1,439 minutes, accounting for 56 per cent of senior game-time in his position across the World Cup cycle. Cowan-Dickie (729 minutes) is at 29 per cent, with Dan (258 minutes) at 10 per cent. Curtis Langdon (97 minutes) and Gabriel Oghre (14 minutes) are the only other men to have appeared for England at hooker in Test matches across the same period.

Among hookers for the 12 Nations Championship teams, only Julián Montoya and Tevita Ikanivere, the respective captains of Argentina and Fiji, are surpassing George's share of game time. England's reliance on George and Cowan-Dickie, with the latter appearing against the Springboks three months after his previous outing for Sale Sharks, and an apparent lack of trust in Dan — or any third-choice option — on the biggest occasions could hurt unless the situation changes. "How did we get here?" is also a fair question.

Before anything else, George should be saluted for his durability as well as other assets. His leadership is clearly valued, with throwing accuracy and scrummaging his X-factor attributes.

England did not lose a lineout while George was on the pitch over their three Nations Championship matches, and used that platform effectively. Their scrum stood firm in South Africa before squeezing Fiji and Argentina, notwithstanding the concession of a couple of penalties in each of those matches.

One coach pinpointed game sense and set-piece solidity as Borthwick's major requirements in a hooker. The second of those qualities, they explained, is rare in modern hookers as most of them are converted back-rowers. This source suggested that Langdon of Northampton Saints could have an "outside chance" of breaking into the World Cup reckoning if he remains consistent.

Nathan Jibulu, an explosive athlete, was also mentioned, but concerns of throwing "frailty" would need to be definitively dispelled. Another elite coach believes Dan must be "knocking on the door" along with Jamie Blamire and Kepu Tuipulotu, even if the latter would represent a gamble — especially around the scrum and lineout — because of his age. The consensus was that Borthwick "knows what he likes".

There will be many wistful England supporters who wonder what might have been had the conversations between Alfie Barbeary, Lee Blackett and Eddie Jones reached a different conclusion. Over those chats, while Barbeary was with Wasps, he was told by Jones that he could either be a world-leading hooker or a "mediocre back-rower in the Premiership". The catch was that Barbeary, who had been working on his throwing at Nottingham in the second tier, would have to relish his front-row responsibilities.

Ultimately, with back row a quicker route to consistent first-team action, Barbeary stayed there. At 6ft 1in and 18st 4lb, his physical dimensions are similar to those of Peato Mauvaka of France or Samisoni Taukei'aho of the All Blacks, and he can be as destructive a carrier.

Eight England A and uncapped fixtures since 2024 have provided chances for Borthwick to monitor potential newbies. Blamire, who won the last of his seven senior caps in a 20-9 defeat by Wales on the cusp of the last World Cup, has been granted the most game time. Langdon, Oghre, Dan, Jibulu, Tuipulotu and Sam Riley have all had opportunities as well.

But George seeing 67 minutes against a France XV at Twickenham a year ago, prior to the tour of Argentina, underlines how Borthwick has favoured his former Saracens team-mate.

Dan, something of a World Cup bolter in 2023, had appeared to be the chosen one. He was part of the inaugural group of players to be awarded an enhanced Elite Player Squad (EPS) contract in October 2024, but lasted only 12 months before Cowan-Dickie replaced him in that cohort.

A vicious pinball of a runner, the 25-year-old had a gilt-edged shot to state his starting credentials in San Juan last year after George received his British & Irish Lions call-up. The lineout faltered badly and Dan has seen precisely nine minutes of Test action since.

Despite this, and although Borthwick looked at Blamire, Jibulu and Tuipulotu in training camps as recently as May and June, 20-cap Dan apparently remains third choice. It could well be that he, George and Cowan-Dickie go to the World Cup. Dan will be a year — and possibly a few caps — wilier, which may encourage Borthwick to trust him, and the extended pre-season should allow the veterans to manage their bodies. Even so, given George's age and the fitness issues of Cowan-Dickie, it would be a huge risk not to have contingencies.

Options are there, and probably fall into two groups. Blamire, Oghre and Langdon, the front-liners at Leicester, Bristol and Northampton respectively, are all 28 with a healthy amount of know-how.

Jibulu is 23 and Tuipulotu 20, with England also tracking 22-year-old Craig Wright, a star of the under-20 World Championship victory in 2024. Any of these three would be a wild card, yet all of them offer defensive breakdown spoiling and aggression in contact.

While Borthwick's 2023 World Cup squad was hugely experienced, Alex Mitchell and George Martin travelled with nine caps between them, and ended up in the starting line-up for the knockout rounds. England must act quickly because if 2027 is compromised by problems at hooker, they will have only themselves to blame.

All Blacks to 'freshen up' captain Savea for South Africa series

Charlie Morgan

Dave Rennie has named three uncapped players in a 44-man All Blacks squad for the Greatest Rivalry tour of South Africa.

Rennie has retained all 36 players from the group that beat France, Italy and Ireland over the opening three fixtures of the Nations Championship in July, including captain Ardie Savea, while adding a sprinkling of new faces. Prop Siale Lauaki, back-rower Semisi Tupou Ta'eiloa and fly half Josh Jacomb will all be vying for Test debuts over the four-match series against the Springboks. Lock Fabian Holland, flanker Ethan Blackadder, centre Timoci Tavatavanawai and wing Emoni Narawa are also returning, among others.

Perhaps the most high-profile omission from Rennie's group is Super Rugby-winning Hurricanes co-captain Du'Plessis Kirifi, who has fallen victim to fierce back-row competition.

"Luke [Jacobson], Anton [Segner], Peter Lakai and Ardie can all play seven, and Dups is a good player, he had a good season, but there are good players who have missed the squad, not just him," Rennie explained.

"His job is to go away, keep working hard, and be ready if an opportunity arises. I'd be surprised if we don't call someone in at some stage."

Rennie confirmed that Savea would be a late arrival in South Africa. "Ardie has been training and playing since January 2025," the All Blacks head coach said.

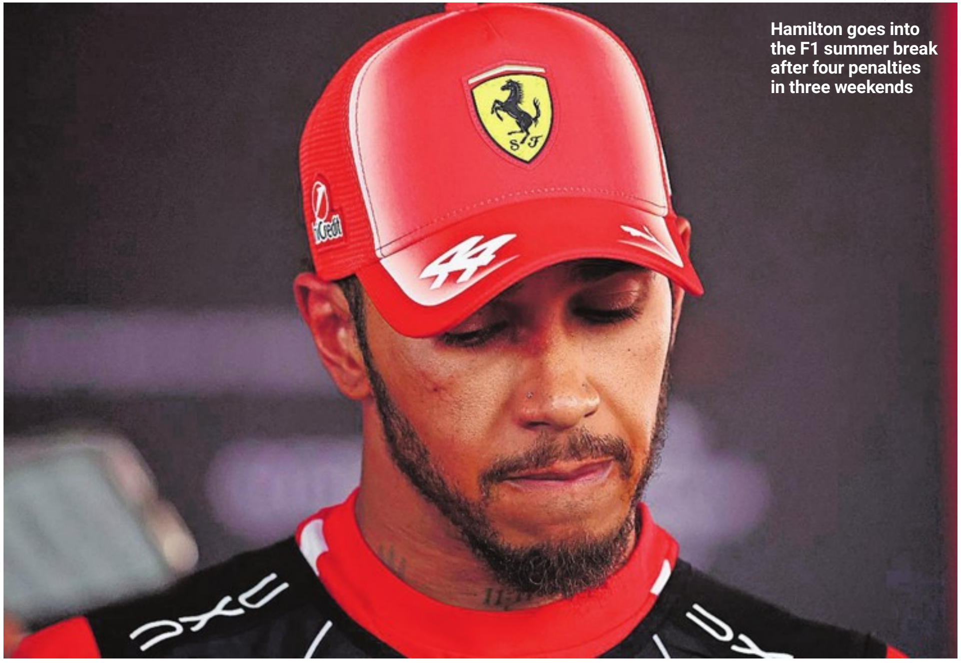
"He had that season there, then went away with the All Blacks, came to Kobe [in Japan] and then straight into the Nations Championship. So, we need to find a window where we can freshen him up. This seemed like an obvious time, so it was a pretty simple decision. It's a decision that we've made on what we think is best for him."

The veteran hooker Codie Taylor will act as tour captain until Savea joins up with the squad.

The first Test is in Johannesburg on August 22, with the final match in Baltimore in the US on September 12.

Why Hamilton title bid is not over – yet

MARCO CANONIERO/SHUTTERSTOCK



Hamilton goes into the F1 summer break after four penalties in three weekends

Briton has lost ground after spate of errors and penalties, but there are still reasons for hope, writes **Molly Hudson**

There is an advantage that Lewis Hamilton takes into this summer break, despite being 50 points behind Kimi Antonelli in a title race that has failed to ignite: he's been here, done it, and won it — seven times.

But that very experience is what has left Hamilton so frustrated over recent races, having received several penalties and made errors. Those are costly, particularly when Antonelli has had the best car for the majority of the 11 races so far.

"Every point counts and you have to seize every opportunity," Hamilton posted on Instagram on Saturday evening, admitting even he was finding it difficult to remain positive.

Here we break down the recent missed opportunities, and identify reasons for optimism for the second half of the season.

THE PENALTIES

The most glaringly obvious room for improvement is in the sheer number of penalties Hamilton has accumulated of late.

At Silverstone, he received a five-second time penalty for a false start. While Hamilton accepts responsibility because he did move before the lights, he said it has been discussed in the drivers' briefing that penalties have been applied on an "inconsistent" basis.

"There's drivers in the past that have moved and haven't been penalised," he said. "We discussed the fact [that] as long as you're not moving when the last lights are on, you shouldn't be penalised, because I wasn't out of my box, and they agreed. So, they're looking into that for the future," Hamilton said.

In Belgium, his five-second penalty for causing a collision with George Russell on the opening lap was widely regarded as harsh. Russell called it a "racing incident" rather than a cause for further punishment, despite it ending his race.

Serving that time penalty proved costly — it played into a complicated double-stack pitstop in which Hamilton failed to receive the front wing flap adjustment he had requested, and drove into a mechanic, leading to more overall time loss. His fourth-place finish was a reasonable attempt at damage limitation, but still a missed opportunity.

Then last weekend a realistic chance of victory was ruined by a penalty in qualifying for impeding Oscar Piastri on his final flying lap. There can be no disputing the penalty, but it was avoidable, a miscommunication issue with Hamilton's race engineer, who told him too late that Piastri was approaching. That demoted him from second to fifth on the grid, at a circuit where it is tricky to overtake.

In the race, Hamilton received a five-second penalty for speeding in the pitlane — he was 0.1km/h over the 80km/h speed limit — a driver error. When the penalty was applied, he dropped from fourth to fifth, behind Charles Leclerc, his Ferrari team-mate.

His four penalties

Where	What	Cost	His fault?
Silverstone	False start	5sec	Yes
Belgium	Collision	5sec	50/50
Hungary	Impeding	Three-place grid penalty	No
Hungary	Speeding in pitlane	5sec	Yes

ROOM TO IMPROVE

There have been smaller mistakes that have hampered his chances. While Hamilton's qualifying form has improved vastly compared with the closing months of his time at Mercedes and his maiden Ferrari season, he often concludes a session feeling as though he has not quite extracted the maximum possible.

In Budapest, McLaren felt Lando Norris's pole was largely down to execution, driver and team working perfectly to maximise their pace, when data showed Ferrari had the faster car at their disposal.

That was as much down to the execution of Ferrari as a team as Hamilton himself — and Fred Vasseur, the Ferrari team principal, admitted that the Scuderia had made too many mistakes over the weekend, including slightly slower than usual pitstops.

REASONS FOR OPTIMISM

As Hamilton said before the summer break "usually the second half [of the season] is a stronger period for me".

While Norris's victory in Budapest looked like a missed opportunity for Ferrari, it also showed McLaren can capitalise on any rare off-days for the title contenders. So a bad day could mean fifth or sixth, rather than third, with bigger points swings.

Reliability also continues to be an issue for Mercedes, with Antonelli likely to need to take a power-unit grid penalty at some stage.

Rising star Koivun delivers on hype by holding off Scheffler for victory

American prodigy, 21, shows mental fortitude by sweeping to win in only his third pro event, writes **Rick Broadbent**

Golf has a new rising star. A week after Ryan Fox showed the power of perseverance by winning his first major at the age of 39, Jackson Koivun underlined the hype swirling around his move to the pro ranks by fending off the challenge of Scottie Scheffler to gain his first PGA Tour triumph at 21.

Koivun has been a professional since finishing in a tie for 23rd place at the US Open last month but is already the world No73.

After a hugely impressive college career at Auburn University in Alabama, he made the switch look seamless as a bogey-free 66 at the 3M Open in Minnesota earned him a three-shot victory over runner-up Scheffler, who is still looking for his first win since January.

"I definitely had some nerves coming down 18 and all throughout the crowd I kept hearing, 'Scottie's coming, Scottie's coming,'" Koivun, who is from California, said. There is always a danger in overhyping prodigies and the attention given to the 17-year-old Charlie Woods, son of Tiger, is unlikely to aid his progress, but there may be no need for kid gloves with Koivun. His peers and coaches laud his mental strength, which is clear from the words scrawled on his glove. "I write 'confidence' and 'trust' and 'dominate'," he explained.

"'Dominate' is a word I came up with in college because I just wanted to go see how good I can play. I came up with it with my short-game coach, Josh Gregory, and it helped me a lot with my mindset."

Was this just the beginning, someone asked? "Yes ma'am," he said.

Koivun, right, is already known for being level-headed and after Saturday's round of 61 he never looked like allowing circumstances to affect his methodology. Hence the way he described his emotional outburst at the end: "I felt like that was an appropriate time." If TPC Twin Cities in Blaine was not the hardest test — Koivun finished at a record 25 under par while Michael Kim signed for a second-round 59 — it was a hugely impressive win. Scheffler, Hideki Matsuyama and Brian Harman were three major winners in his wake.

"I feel like we're seeing a lot of really, really good young talent in the game today," Scheffler said. "When you see guys come out of college, they're really prepared, even more than when we were coming out. A lot of the time you can see that belief when they see some other guys have success. I haven't spoken to Jackson yet. I haven't had a chance to see him hit a shot yet. Obviously, I've heard about his pedigree in college but I haven't seen it in person. I'm looking forward to that."

Koivun, whose family relocated to North Carolina when he was 17, had a stellar college year in 2024, scooping most of the major prizes. He made his PGA Tour debut that year at the Memorial Tournament and became the amateur world No1 last summer. His tied-23rd place at the US Open meant he shared the low amateur honours with Ryder Cowan. By turning pro he had to give up a place at this month's Open Championship, gained via the Royal and Ancient's Mark H McCormack Medal given to the top amateur, but has now had two top-ten finishes in three pro starts.

Meanwhile, Australia's Lucas Herbert carried his Open form into the UK leg of the beleaguered LIV Golf series at JCB Golf and Country Club in Rocester.

Herbert was one of three players to achieve a record-equalling round of 62 at Royal Birkdale, and he was too good on the LIV circuit where 30 under par gave him a six-stroke win over Tyrrell Hatton.

Bryson DeChambeau was third and still declines to explain his abject behaviour at Birkdale, including his threat to involve Donald Trump after receiving a two-stroke penalty. Trump, of course, could not contain himself. "I thought the Bryson call was a tough call," he said.

Elsewhere, the partnership between the Asian Tour, PGA Tour and DP World Tour has hurt LIV's survival quest, although chiefs remain optimistic about a shortened ten-round series with vastly reduced prize pots. The season finale in Michigan looks likely to be scrapped and a decision on the future of the league is expected within a month.

Draper injury setback ahead of US Open

Tennis
Willis Bennett

Jack Draper's comeback from injury was dealt a blow five weeks before the US Open when the Briton pulled out of an event in America last night.

The 24-year-old withdrew from the DC Open because of an ongoing arm issue, leaving his participation at Flushing Meadows next month in doubt. Draper has missed all three grand-slam events so far this year.

Draper, who is coached by Sir Andy Murray, has fallen to No147 in the world. This lowly rank means that he would probably have to come through qualifying – assuming a return to full fitness – to secure a place in the main draw, which starts on August 30.

The former British No1 has played only 13 matches this year, and has not appeared since pulling out of Wimbledon at short notice because of the bone bruising in his left humerus that kept him off court for eight months last season. He remains hopeful of playing in Montreal and Cincinnati before the US Open, and has said he is "getting closer to where I want to be".

"These last months have felt like nothing but adversity and setbacks," Draper said on Instagram.

"Most days I've spent in doubt, yet hopeful that I can keep taking positive steps forward and finding ways to progress. I'm only grateful for the struggle and what it's teaching me."

ANDREW COULDRIDGE/REUTERS

Ramsay-Peaty has so far failed in Glasgow to add to his tally of four Commonwealth Games gold medals

Ramsay-Peaty: Double bronze is a success, my superpower is being dad

Rick Broadbent

"Human first, athlete second." They were four words that explained why Adam Ramsay-Peaty was able to raise a smile after winning a bronze medal for the second time in three nights at the Tollcross Swimming Centre.

The three-times Olympic champion, 31, was never in the frame for the Commonwealth gold in the 50m breaststroke but fought hard to hang on for another podium finish behind Australia's Sam Williamson and South Africa's Michael Houlie. The winning time was 26.50sec and Ramsay-Peaty's was 26.94, both of which would have been a breeze in his undefeated pomp, but things are different now.

Times change, both in terms of the clock and stages of life. Project 56 once sounded like a fable hatched in a sci-fi script meeting, but he knocked off the first sub-57 100m breaststroke swim in 2019. All that glitters is clearly not only gold, but Birmingham 2022 remains his last significant title, and when you have been the best for so long, can anything less be satisfying?

Well, the answer seems to be yes it can — if he can change his perspective. The much-publicised rift with his family can scarcely help, and he is expecting a child with wife Holly, daughter of the celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay. After the emotional aftermath of Saturday's defeat in the 100m, when he talked of the "shit I've been through" and questioned the point of his sacrifices if it was not compensated with sporting excellence, his mother, Caroline, posted a message that said "we continue to support Adam from afar". It remains a messy personal backdrop.

Last night, Ramsay-Peaty seemed more resigned to where he is. "Something is not clicking but I have to learn from the 100m and the perspective of it's my first champs since Paris [Olympics] and to get two bronzes I'd say that's success. I'm not going to be too hard on myself, not any more," he said.

"My superpower looks very different now. I think juggling babies with milk and having a toddler around is, I guess, a different superpower when that time comes. But as a professional athlete, I'm still committed. We just had to approach it very differently because I've been that person who wins all the time, and it costs you pretty much everything, and I won't say it's worth it now.

"For me, that period where I was undefeated for eight years, whatever it was, it was athlete first, then human. Now it's human first, then athlete, which is a very fair price to pay, a very good gamble. I say gamble because, again, we don't really know what the outcome is going to be."

Ramsay-Peaty has always been an interesting presence in the sporting firmament. He does not spout patriotic platitudes, but once told me that he was watching *Battle of Britain* and *Zulu* as a six-year-old, and loved the royal family. Still frustrated by the loss of "the power per stroke", he says he still has more but is learning to cope with setbacks. "I really enjoyed it," he claimed.

Archie Goodburn finished tied for last in the final but the 25-year-old Scot, who was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer in 2024, received the loudest chorus of approval.

Asked how he remained positive, he said: "Sorry, I want to find an answer for this. Well, I advocate because I believe my advocacy can make a difference to my own life. And the best way I can do that is to be positive about the situation and positive for change.

"But I also advocate for the future Archies. I swim for future Archies that want to succeed on an international level, but also young patients and people with brain cancer under the age of 40. Right now I'm frustrated but I'm going to look back at this as a pretty incredible moment in my life."

Smith, 16, in 'incredible' silver swim

Craig Lord

Remember the name. Amalie Smith. The 16-year-old English schoolgirl last night emerged from a pool of Olympians in Glasgow with a silver medal in a 400m medley that marked her international senior debut.

The teenager finished second behind the experienced Australian Jenna Forrester in a time of 4min 33.70sec — only a couple of seconds shy of Hannah Miley's British record.

Smith evokes memories of Sharron Davies, who was 15 when she won Commonwealth gold for England in 1978 in the same event, two years out from taking Olympic silver in a final tainted by East German doping.

A schoolgirl at Weald of Kent Grammar School in Tonbridge, Smith has trained at RTW Monson Swimming Club under the guidance of coach Karen Bradbury since she was 13.

"I'm so excited, so happy. I can't believe it," Smith said. "I came in here thinking I would love to get a medal, but to actually achieve it is incredible. Going in I was quite nervous but as soon as I dived in, I was fine. It was just like any other event I've been to."

Smith's successful transition from junior to senior waters adds to the sense of an athlete heading for much bigger prizes, but she said: "I think it's just not getting ahead of myself and actually taking a step back and making sure that you realise how much you have achieved. It's about just thinking about things that are realistic and doing them progressively and using this as a learning experience."

Asked what was next, she noted the 200m medley and relays in Glasgow, after which she would be "sticking around to support everyone else [in other sports] before going home to get ready for the European Championships in Paris".

"I'm really looking forward to it," Smith, who claimed the European junior crown two weeks ago, said of those senior championships. "The venue looks so cool, so I'm looking forward to racing there."

Asked if she felt she belonged in senior company now, she said: "It's hard to say at the moment. Everyone is really friendly and so supportive, so hopefully after Paris I will feel quite at home."

England dropouts passing up big title chance, says Thompson

Rick Broadbent

As one of Britain's greatest sport stars and the owner of a hat-trick of Commonwealth titles, Daley Thompson is well placed to judge on the drip-feed of dropouts in Glasgow.

And the legendary decathlete thinks athletes who chose to skip the event without injury are missing out. "It's a big title and a chance to win something," Thompson told The Times. "You never know how many of those opportunities you are going to get.

"It's really important for the Commonwealth Games to stay in whatever form because it's also a brilliant learning experience for those who get to the top. I don't know the reasons why people are pulling out. They might have knocks and if there were a few weeks before the Europeans, maybe it would be different."

It took a part-time Uefa official seven hours on a coach and 10.07 seconds on his feet to ram home Thompson's point. "I personally don't understand why athletes wouldn't want to come and represent the country," England's Elliot Jones said after qualifying for today's 100m semi-finals.

The number of athletes pulling out has provided fuel for the Games naysayers. Over the past week, nine English athletes, including leading lights Katarina Johnson-Thompson, Matthew Hudson-Smith, Dina Asher-Smith, Daryll Neita and Amber Anning, have withdrawn.

The last to go were Louie Hinchliffe, the former NCAA 100m champion coached by Carl Lewis, and Charlie Dobson, an Olympic relay medallist.

With Scotland's Eilish McColgan, billed as the face of these Games judging by the Glasgow billboards, also pulling out with an injury, it has been a troubled start for organisers already trying to fend off notions that the event has faded into irrelevance by stripping away sports and moving from the BBC for the first time in 70 years.

Some of this is just unfortunate as athletes refuse to risk exacerbating even the slightest injury with the European Championships starting the week after next. With Team England having a reserve list, people have not been denied places, but the lateness of some decisions did not help Jones, who has been scrambling to find hotel rooms for his parents and girlfriend after being upgraded from the relay squad.

"It is absolutely incredible," he said after being the third-fastest qualifier, albeit the top seven men were given a bye. "The national pride I have for my country is so high, and to be able to represent it in front of a 'home' crowd means the world to me. Regardless of timetables, I'm going to take every international call I get."

Thompson won three Commonwealth golds

The Wiganer, 28, is only a part-time runner and works for Uefa's venue operations team at European matches, which included Tottenham Hotspur's clash with Atletico Madrid last season.

Last Thursday night he got a call from England's sprint manager about replacing Hinchliffe. "She said, 'How would you feel if you were offered the chance to run in the individual event?' I was like, 'Let me think about that — yes!' I got the bus the next morning from Loughborough and it took us seven hours with the traffic."

The proximity of the Commonwealth and European showpieces meant some established stars, such as the Olympic 800m champion Keely Hodgkinson, have always said they would skip Glasgow, but weighing the respective merits of the two events is not always clear-cut.

At the 2024 Europeans, Lamont Marcell Jacobs won the 100m in 10.02sec, the same time that Ferdinand Omanyala clocked to win Commonwealth gold four years ago.

Amy Hunt and Georgia Hunter Bell remain as star names on the England team. Hunt showed her class when winning a 200m silver medal at last year's World Championships, but she has never won a major senior solo title. Hunter Bell, an Olympic and world medallist, has never won a global gold outdoors.

About 7,500 fans were in Scotstoun Stadium on a cold morning for the start of the athletics and there was a warm if not raucous atmosphere. Another man who did turn up was Jeremiah Azu. He was crowned world and European indoor champion last year, but he has not won a Commonwealth medal.

Asked why he was here, the Welshman pointed to the word "Cymru" on his vest and said: "Because of this. Growing up in Wales, you feel such a sense of connection to the people, and for me to be able to put this vest on and try and take it to a podium is such an honour, and I would never put that opportunity to the side."

El Salvador footballer still plagued by run-in with ICE nine years on

Lizandro Claros tells **James Gheerbrant** how being detained as a teen wrecked his promising career

CESAR GOMEZ/JAM MEDIA/GETTY IMAGES

Claros, right, made his full international debut in 2021 but has only four caps because he is still barred from entering the US. He was deported aged 17, below, in 2017 — a development which hit his parents and siblings, inset, especially hard

The course of Lizandro Claros's life was irrevocably altered on a rainy Friday afternoon nine years ago. He woke up that morning as a model student and a stellar high-school footballer — "one of the best central defenders [for his age] in the [United States]", in the estimation of one of his coaches — with a college scholarship and a plan to study engineering. By that evening, he and his brother Diego were detained, dressed in prison uniforms and bound for deportation.

A year later, they were put on a flight to El Salvador, heading for a country riven by gang violence, and a town, Jucuapa, known primarily for the manufacture of coffins.

Sitting on that plane, Lizandro was full of fears. At that time, he remembers, "the gang problem was still going pretty hard" in the country of his birth. "I was scared they would target [us] to join them ... that we could fall into following in their footsteps." That fear did not come true though. Today, Lizandro is the captain of one of the top Salvadoran football clubs, CD Firpo: they won the Apertura, the national championship for the first half of last season.

Some other fears he held, however, have been realised. Deportees from the US are banned from re-entering the country for ten years, "so I was really worried I wasn't going to see my mum again," he says. She was ill prior to the deportation and "was hit the hardest ... we saw her get much worse when all this happened. Sadly, I couldn't see her again alive ... she passed away last year."

During the first year of Donald Trump's second presidency, a report by UC Berkeley and UCLA's Deportation Data Project (DDP) suggests, deportations increased by a factor of five. On July 4, during the World Cup, the Department of Homeland Security boasted it had "celebrated Freedom 250 by arresting criminal illegal aliens": a spokeswoman said agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) had spent the weekend "arresting the worst of the worst".

But the DDP, which uses the Freedom of Information Act to gather datasets directly from the government, notes that under Trump there has been an eight-fold increase in ICE detentions of people with no criminal convictions. Lizandro's case, which occurred during the first Trump presidency, is a sadly typical one, which shows how long-lasting and far-reaching the punishments of deportation can be.

During his teenage years, the Claros family lived in Maryland. Lizandro played for Bethesda Soccer Club, a local team. "We would train every day and play every weekend," he says. "I had all my family there, my brothers [and sister], my parents, my friends in high school. I was trying to do good because I wanted to go to college. Everything was good. I felt like that was my place to be."

The Claros family had arrived in the US in dribs and drabs: his father first, a few months after Lizandro's birth; his mother a few years later; followed in instalments by their children, latterly Lizandro and Diego, aged ten and 14. Their journey was hazardous, their methods haphazard: Lizandro's parents paid a friend of a relative to bring their youngest children to America, where their papers and passports were found to be fraudulent.

Initially they were allowed to stay. It was a precarious but happy life, with football and family gatherings interspersed with periodic check-ins with ICE. Under Barack Obama's administration, deportations focused mainly on expelling criminals. As a dedicated student-athlete, Lizandro was in a sort of benign limbo: not granted permanent residency, but not likely to be removed either.

But Trump's election in 2016 heralded a drastic change in ICE's priorities. Later that year, what Lizandro and Diego had expected to be a routine check-in ended with them being detained. Despite a campaign by Lizandro's schoolfriends, and the opposition of local Democrat politicians, there was no reprieve. And so the brothers found themselves living with their aunt and grandparents in Jucuapa, learning quickly "how things had to be, so we wouldn't make a mistake or say something we shouldn't".

A few months later, they took up an offer to study at the Nicaraguan campus of an American university, where Lizandro met his wife. He began playing for a club in the Nicaraguan second division, and enjoyed "spending time with the same guys, training every day".

He decided to pursue his football dream in El Salvador, where he rose quickly, and made his professional debut for Independiente, a top-flight club, aged 22. It didn't take long for him to be called up to the national team by Hugo Pérez, an El Salvador-born former USA international who played at the 1994 World Cup. He made his debut in 2021, in a World Cup qualifier against Mexico, marking Raúl Jiménez.

About 1 per cent of the global population of male professional footballers went to the recent World Cup. Lizandro's story is a salutary reminder of what life is like for a much greater proportion of the 125,000 men around the world who play football for a living.

"Our infrastructure is pretty bad," he says. "You go to clubs where they don't water the field, so they get hard as a rock. It maintains the level of our football pretty low. The outcome of that is injuries, ACL tears." At Firpo, they have a clinic with rehabilitation machines but more usually in Central America "most teams don't have that equipment ... you don't see many teams try to take care of players".

In El Salvador, he says, half the top-flight teams pay a salary above the national average; most of the others "pay maybe double the [national] minimum wage". That's if the players get paid at all. "I've been on the good side of El Salvador soccer now, and the bad side, which is the team owing you 2½ months' pay."

During a previous spell at Firpo, he says, it fell to him "to be the one to go to the [former club] president and ask him to make [payment] as [soon] as possible ... back in the day, I didn't have my wife, my kids, and it was hard for me on my own, you know? So I can't think [how hard it must be for] the guys who have families."

He enjoys the responsibility of being captain. "My character is trying to push [my younger team-mates] to do better because I know they can," he says. Given his leadership credentials, Firpo's success, the fact about three quarters of the squad are drawn from the Salvadoran league, you might imagine Lizandro would be a regular for the national team. Yet he has only four caps, the most recent of which came in 2022, for reasons which become apparent.

Having been deported in 2017, Lizandro, 28, cannot enter the US until 2027. So had El Salvador qualified for this World Cup, he would most likely have been unable to participate. It's not hard to understand why that counted against him with Pérez's successors.

It's not just the World Cup though. Since 1991, every edition of the Gold Cup, the continental championship for teams from North and Central America, has been held wholly or partly in the US. Moreover, for reasons of economics, demographics and infrastructure, El Salvador play the vast majority of their friendly matches in the US (22 out of 27 since the start of this decade).

"I think that's a really big part of [why I haven't won more caps]," Lizandro says. "The guys in the national team, all of them will go to the Gold Cup, to friendlies in the US. The coach will always try to keep the same guys going. I probably could have done much more [in my career] if I'd had that possibility to go more with the national team."

For him, deportation has not only been a one-time punishment; it has continued to follow him and, in a very real way, altered his prospects in the new life and career he has forged for himself.

Lizandro is remarkably resilient and lacking in bitterness. He is a husband and father now, grateful for the life he has built from the wreckage of his American dream.

"I feel I can give my son a really good life," he says. "People who live in the US are working from daylight to daylight, and it's really hard." Next year, the ten-year ban expires and he will be able to apply for a visa to visit. He has seen his father and sister on a couple of occasions since his deportation, but also has another brother whom he has not seen since.

In March, he was recalled to the El Salvador squad by the new manager Hernán Dario Gómez, who was Panama's manager when they played England in 2018.

He sees his future in coaching and is studying for his badges. Asked whether he sees himself coaching in El Salvador or the US, he says: "I think both. Here in El Salvador, we're missing coaches who really develop players. I believe that if we had better coaches, better developers, our future in soccer would be much brighter."

He is still, he says, "crazy for soccer". It has been the constant and the compass of his life, the game he learnt barefoot on the hard ground of his village in El Salvador, pursued with dedication in the US, and which rescued him and gave him direction when all seemed lost.

And whether his vocation leads him to the hard-baked pitches of his homeland or the lush, whitewashed ones of America, the young players he will work with could not wish for a better mentor.

How Chelsea spent £210m this summer without fear of sanctions

Peter Rutzler says that player sales, totalling more than £900m since the BlueCo takeover, hold key

Chelsea suggested they would alter their approach to the transfer market this summer but it is one thing to talk about it, and another to do it.

Their two latest signings show they are being true to their word. Maxence Lacroix, who is awaiting official confirmation of his £52 million move from Crystal Palace, is the first player aged 26 or over signed by Chelsea since the summer of 2022 — the first pre-season of the BlueCo ownership — while in Morgan Rogers, the club have signed a widely coveted player who will slot straight into the first team. Yesterday it was confirmed that Chelsea are exploring deals for Danny Welbeck, 35, the Brighton & Hove Albion forward, and the 36-year-old Brentford and England midfielder Jordan Henderson.

Lacroix is a player who meets an immediate need: greater security in central defence, a longstanding area of complaint for Chelsea fans. Rogers, meanwhile, was signed despite interest from champions Arsenal and for a huge fee of £117 million that blew any competition out of the water. It was an important statement for the club, and a show of support for the new manager, Xabi Alonso, whose appointment was also regarded as a coup.

"When we started talking, we wanted to build a competitive squad, and you need players who can have that almost instant impact. I'm sure Morgan won't need much time to adapt to the club, to the system, to his team-mates," Alonso, speaking in Sydney on the club's pre-season tour, said. "That was the idea that we wanted, to get a top player, and Morgan is one of them.

"It's a great signing. In that position we needed an important player and I'm sure there were not many better options than him. It means a lot for everyone and for the players that are already here as well — they have a good feeling and we're looking forward to having him in a few weeks. Chelsea have also signed Marco Palestra, who, club sources point out, is also a ready-made player as the Serie A defender of the year, for £47 million from Atalanta, and have concluded pre-agreed deals for Geovany Quenda, Emmanuel Emegha and Dastan Satpaev.

Altogether, more than £210 million in transfer fees has been added to the club's books. Chelsea may not be finished yet either; they had a £64million bid rejected for Bournemouth's Alex Scott and have been chasing Pep Chavarría, a 28-year-old Rayo Vallecano full back.

"We have to be ready," Alonso said of further incomings. "The market is open for a few weeks. We need to be aware of different positions, different situations. So, for sure, we have a plan, an idea, and we need to assess in the right moments."

Given the extent of Chelsea's expenditure in four years of BlueCo ownership, it is unsurprising that questions have been asked about how they have been able to invest such sums again without facing more sanctions. The club revealed the biggest pre-tax loss in English football history in their recent accounts, for the 2024-25 season, submitting an operating loss above £200 million for a fourth successive year. They face a third season in four without Champions League income, and have not had a long-term front-of-shirt sponsor for three seasons. Their commercial income has trailed that of their top-six rivals.

Chelsea have navigated the Premier League's old Profitability and Sustainability Rules, assisted by the £200 million sale of the women's team to the club's parent company and the £70.5 million generated from the sale of two hotels by Chelsea to another sister company. But Uefa does not include those sources of income in its calculations and Chelsea therefore fell foul of its financial regulations for their 2024 accounts, entering into a settlement agreement that, even though they will not be involved in European competition, still requires the club to abide by set financial targets for this coming season too.

Last season they had to ensure they did not surpass a €5 million (£4.3 million) deficit — a figure that could be increased to €60 million if it is covered entirely by equity, so not a loan from the ownership group. Failure to meet that target would trigger a fine of up to €20 million; if the deficit is greater than the target by €20 million, they would have breached the agreement and could be thrown out of European competition when they next qualify. For this coming year, the deficit target is zero, with added headroom based on overperformance from last season's target, up to a maximum of €60 million.

Club sources will not comment on whether Chelsea received an equity injection from the club's ownership group to provide some breathing space in their settlement agreement. But they did not breach the settlement, and have full confidence they will remain compliant.

Chelsea were fined £2.6 million by Uefa last season — of which £1.7 million was conditionally suspended — but that was for breaching Uefa's Squad Cost Ratio rules (SCR), which require clubs to spend only 70 per cent of their revenue on wages and transfers. The Premier League has moved on from PSR to its own form of SCR, where spending is limited to 85 per cent of revenue — with wiggle room up to 115 per cent before sporting sanctions, not just fines, are imposed.

It had been suggested that Chelsea were on track to avoid trouble before their latest outlay. Last year their revenue was bolstered by success at the Club World Cup, worth £86.5 million, as well as compensation received for Enzo Maresca's resignation and subsequent appointment at Manchester City, worth £17 million. Their revenue, according to club sources, was in the region of a record £700 million.

But Chelsea's revenue in their latest accounts — the 2024-25 season, when they were out of the Champions League — was £491 million, and they already at that stage had £224 million worth of amortised transfer fees moving through the accounts and a wage bill of £359 million. This coming year, it is understood that a lack of Champions League football could cost the club £100 million. And that is before another £210 million figure for summer transfer spending is added to the books. It all raises the question: how are they keeping their heads above regulatory water while still being able to spend?

The answer is simple. Chelsea have become good sellers — so good that it has become the determining factor for the club in offsetting their losses.

Chelsea have spent in excess of £1.8 billion on players since the BlueCo takeover. But in sales, they have taken in more than £900 million; last season was the first time a top-flight club recouped more than £300 million, which almost entirely matched their transfer spend.

They are likely to go close to those numbers again this summer, having recouped a forecast £170 million from the sales of Marc Cucurella, Tyrique George, Andrey Santos and potentially Alejandro Garnacho, who has joined Aston Villa on loan but with a high obligation-to-buy fee. They expect to pass £1 billion in sales under BlueCo before September.

After their initial high net spends of early seasons — supported by controversial workarounds, like selling the women's team — Chelsea are operating with their purchases regularly offset by sales. Their model of lower, incentive-driven basic salaries for players helps the club move players on more easily if they do not succeed, offering flexibility.

Transfer fees are just one aspect of any deal, along with wage and agent costs, and incoming deals are not paid in full outright. Their £210 million outlay will be recorded as an added

DARREN WALSH/CHELSEA FC/GETTY IMAGES; LARS BARON/GETTY IMAGES; MARTIN RICKETT/PA

Rogers, left, and Lacroix, below, have joined the Chelsea project overseen by Alonso and Todd Boehly, inset below, which has been made possible by recouping a forecast £170 million from the sale of World Cup winner Cucurella, right, and some less prominent squad members this summer

annual cost of £42 million per season, as incoming transfer fees are spread over a player's contract to a maximum of five years — the process known as amortisation. For sales recouped, the profit is calculated by subtracting the amount still to be paid on the player's amortised transfer fee. Santos, sold to Manchester United for £48 million rising to £50million, is a particularly good example given he was signed for £10.2 million on an eight-year deal, as is George, an academy graduate, who was sold to Everton for £24 million of pure profit.

Axel Disasi, Benoît Badiashile, Trevoh Chalobah and Filip Jorgensen could all leave soon and others may be sold or sent out on loan, including Nicolas Jackson, who has been valued at £65 million. Liam Delap, signed last summer for £30 million, also faces an uncertain future, while Malo Gusto and Pedro Neto would command high fees. Chelsea are confident of hitting their sales targets, without necessarily losing key talents. Only Cucurella, who has joined Real Madrid, could be seen in that vein.

More outgoings are needed but Chelsea are confident they can back their new manager while complying with Uefa and Premier League regulations. "We need to be flexible and quick to act," Alonso said. "The main thing is that we have a clear idea, a clear plan that we have built. Probably it will change until the last day of the market being open."

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Alonso in search of 'maturity'

experience to the Chelsea dressing room.

Alonso, speaking yesterday, outlined that "maturity" would be a factor in how the club mould their squad this summer. "We want to build a competitive team, we are in that process," he said. "We have great quality, great talent and we need to know what it takes to compete in the Premier League. We want a squad with the right balance between quality and mentality. Those things need to match in terms of maturity."

Chelsea face Western Sydney Wanderers today, as part of the Sydney Super Cup.

Leeds United are on the verge of sealing the £40 million signing of the goalkeeper James Trafford from Manchester City. Trafford, 23, only moved to City from Burnley 12 months ago for £27million, but Gianluigi Donnarumma's arrival blocked his route to regular first-team appearances.

The England international's likely move to Elland Road comes with Leeds having lost goalkeepers Karl Darlow and Illan Meslier to Manchester United and Arsenal respectively.

Inter Milan are hoping to sign Trafford's former City team-mate, John Stones, on a free transfer. The Serie A champions have offered a two-year deal to the 32-year-old centre back, who is out of contract.

Infantino's broadside at critics for 'planting seeds of hate'

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

The Fifa president Gianni Infantino has accused his critics of "spreading hate" in an extraordinary outburst on social media.

Infantino posted a lengthy defence of the World Cup over 15 pages on Instagram in which he used the word "hate" or "hatred" seven times.

It follows criticism of sky-high ticket prices at the tournament, hydration breaks, allegations of political interference after the USA striker Falorin Balogun had a ban suspended by Fifa after a call from Donald Trump to Infantino, a number of countries having fans blocked from visiting the United States due to visa restrictions and the Iran team being forced to move their training base to Mexico.

Infantino posted that "to everyone who missed our beautiful game... I say sorry that the matches are now over and sorry that you missed all that joy and togetherness. Sorry that you were so consumed by hate and criticism that you missed it all.

"To those behind their pens and papers, behind their screens spreading hate and false rumours, I want to say that while you are sitting behind, we at Fifa are on the front lines organising, working hard, and delivering the best show in the world."

Infantino said there had been no violence or incidents and "100% safety and security".

He added: "All of this was made possible thanks to the governments of the three host countries and their tremendous contributions. Every city was packed with fans from all around the globe. While they celebrated, you [critics] were busy planting seeds of hate.

"While you spread hatred, we worked tirelessly to unite two countries at war. Iran entered the United States without incident or conflict. Countries facing serious health issues or other challenges were granted visas. You [critics] mentioned the few people denied visas and overlooked the millions who were approved, from all parts of the world."

Infantino says the World Cup was "the best show in the world"

In what appeared to be a direct defence of the Balogun decision, he said: "Indeed, 'arguable' referees' decisions or 'strange' disciplinary rulings such as for instance potentially mistaken red or yellow cards or subsequent decisions not to ban players in certain situations are routine and widely accepted in some of the biggest leagues worldwide.

"It's curious that the same countries employing these practices are the ones criticising."

Fifa did not overturn Balogun's red card — something which does happen regularly in leagues — but deferred what should have been an automatic one-match ban for at least a year. It has yet to reveal the disciplinary committee chairman's judgment on the case or explain the decision, which is unprecedented in the World Cup. Fifa insists the chairman alone made the ruling.

Norway is set to make a formal complaint to Fifa's ethics committee about alleged political interference in the case, while the Uefa president, Aleksander Ceferin, appeared to signal a split between the governing bodies by not attending the World Cup final.

Infantino's message concluded: "To those spending their time and energy hating us, please take a moment to reflect, meditate, pray, or watch a football match and truly observe the faces, the eyes, the emotions.

"May you find peace; we at Fifa have found ours and we deliver it, by delivering the most outstanding Fifa World Cup. May football rise above all hate. Finally I am incredibly proud, as Fifa president, to have contributed, even a little, to this show. It's a great feeling! Much love to all."

Van de Ven buoyed by Spurs' ambition

Peter Rutzler Sydney

Micky van de Ven believes Tottenham Hotspur will play better football this season under their head coach Roberto De Zerbi, and says the club have reassured him by showing "new ambition" in the transfer market after the signings of Mateus Fernandes and Sandro Tonali.

De Zerbi, who was appointed in late March, ensured Tottenham avoided relegation from the Premier League on the final day of last season, since when the club have taken an unprecedented approach to recruitment, spending £237 million this summer.

The Brighton & Hove Albion defender Jan Paul van Hecke was signed for £52 million, followed by a record deal to land midfielder Fernandes for £85 million from West Ham United, which was then surpassed by the arrival of Newcastle United's Tonali for £100 million. Tottenham have also signed Marcos Senesi from Bournemouth, Andrew Robertson from Liverpool and Martin Dubravka from Burnley on free transfers.

Van de Ven, a key player whose future has been questioned given Tottenham's successive 17th-placed finishes, said: "It's really good that you can see the club has made some changes. They have brought a really good new manager, in my opinion, and some really good new signings. You can see the club has new ambition. It's something that's really important for players that have been there for a long time.

"Hopefully it will be a different kind of season. It's something we are going to work really hard on, to make some differences because last season was a bit unacceptable from our side."

The 25-year-old is confident that the team will play much more attractive football than last season, the majority of which was under Thomas Frank. Asked if Spurs will be a better team to watch, Van de Ven said: "Yeah, I know that for sure. It's going to be different compared to the former manager we had last season. It's going to be more with the ball I think, more playing football. I think it's going to be more enjoyable also for people to watch, when playing offensive football."

Tottenham continue their pre-season against Sydney FC tomorrow, followed by a clash with Chelsea on Saturday as part of the Sydney Super Cup.

Van de Ven, who has three years left on his contract, has enjoyed working with De Zerbi. "The last couple of weeks of last season, you saw [he] brought a lot of passion into our group, a lot mentality wise, passion wise. We started to play a lot with the ball, because he loves us to be on the ball.

"I like being on the ball, instead of running behind the ball the whole time. He brings a lot of good energy and from pre-season, we have really got the time now to bring his football into the team."

New five-second rule for throw-ins

CONTINUED FROM BACK

of the need to find a solution and the trial has therefore been created.

The trial does allow for exceptions; if the goalkeeper is fouled, is bleeding, needs to be substituted or collides with an outfield player, then their team would not lose a player temporarily.

"The aim is to ensure genuine injuries continue to receive appropriate medical attention while removing any potential sporting advantage associated with stoppages," Pro Ref, the FA and the Premier League said in a statement. The trial will begin in the Carabao Cup preliminary round on Saturday, and be utilised at every men's level down to the sixth tier. If successful, a permanent law change could be introduced for the 2027-28 season.

English football authorities are eager to speed up the game and the latest Premier League Football Survey found 85 per cent of stakeholders considered goalkeeper timeouts to be an issue.

The problem is perhaps even more prevalent in the WSL. After January's goalless draw away to Arsenal, the Manchester United defender Dominique Janssen all but admitted her team's goalkeeper, Phallon Tullis-Joyce, had feigned an injury. "Phallon went down for us so we could discuss tactical changes," Janssen said.

Other leagues will trial a law whereby the captain must always leave the field when a goalkeeper requires treatment. If the captain is the goalkeeper, then the player to leave the field must be nominated before the match.

Meanwhile, a five-second countdown for throw-ins and goal kicks will be utilised in English football this season, and there will be a ten-second time limit for players leaving the pitch when substituted. Similar measures were used at this summer's World Cup, which returned an increased ball-in-play time. During the tournament, referees were also advised to stop players going to the technical area when a goalkeeper was receiving treatment.

Ifab has also clarified the mistaken identity law, saying it should not be used to change the referee's decision on what offence was committed. Instead, the law relates to scenarios when the player who committed the offence is incorrectly identified.

Another Ifab trial will allow referees to rule out goals from free kicks or corners if the attacking team commit an offence before the ball is in play. This measure was in use at the World Cup, and led to Torbjorn Heggem's goal for Norway in their quarter-final against England being chalked off for a push by Erling Haaland on Elliot Anderson.

Sport

England's hooker issue

Steve Borthwick must act – time for a wild-card option?

Analysis, page 48

Hamilton's title hopes alive

Why Briton has what it takes despite 50-point deficit

Molly Hudson, page 49

Chelsea turn to Henderson and Welbeck

Alonso's shock moves in search for 'maturity'

Paul Joyce, Peter Rutzler

Chelsea are working on a surprise deal to sign Jordan Henderson on a free transfer from Brentford.

The England midfielder is wanted by a number of top-flight clubs, but Chelsea are leading the way for the 36-year-old as they seek to add more experience to manager Xabi Alonso's squad. The west London club is also interested in recruiting Danny Welbeck, 35, from Brighton & Hove Albion.

Henderson has spent one season at Brentford after a move from Ajax and has a year remaining on his contract, but relations with his current club are strong and they would not stand in his way if he wants to depart.

The next step is essentially for Henderson, a Premier League title-winning captain with Liverpool in 2020, to choose where he wants to go and the prospect of joining Chelsea is understandably enticing.

Chelsea tried to sign Granit Xhaka, 33, from Sunderland earlier this summer, but a move for the player who starred for Alonso at Bayer Leverkusen was blocked by the North East club.

Now attention has turned to Henderson, who is recovering from the broken arm he suffered amid the celebrations after England's win over Mexico at the World Cup. The midfielder needed surgery after snapping his arm in two places when landing awkwardly having attempted to vault an advertising hoarding.

His leadership had earned him a place in Thomas Tuchel's squad and he was close to Jude Bellingham and Morgan Rogers, who has joined Chelsea from Aston Villa for £117 million.

Welbeck is in the twilight of his career but has enjoyed a purple patch on the south coast over the past two seasons — and in the process has become the club's all-time Premier League top goalscorer. Last season he scored 13 league goals, a career-high, as Brighton qualified for the Conference League.

Chelsea have altered their approach to recruitment this summer by seeking to add more Premier League-ready personnel to their squad, having previously recruited players mainly under the age of 25. The impending signing of Maxence Lacroix, 26, from Crystal Palace, would be their second-oldest acquisition since 2022.

Chelsea have five centre forwards on the books. The future of Liam Delap — signed for £30million from Ipswich Town last summer — is uncertain after an injury-hit first season at Stamford Bridge, while Nicolas Jackson, who returned from his loan at Bayern Munich after the obligation-to-buy clause — based on appearances — was not met, is valued at £65 million.

Marc Guiu, the 20-year-old former Barcelona striker, Emmanuel Emegha, who recently signed from Strasbourg for a fee in the region of £20 million, and João Pedro, who is regarded as untouchable, complete their options.

At least two forwards are expected to depart either on loan or permanently. Welbeck has 12 months on his Brighton contract and the former Manchester United and Arsenal forward would add

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ANDREW MILLIGAN/PA

English schoolgirl wins silver

Amalie Smith, 16, who attends Weald of Kent Grammar School, starred in the pool at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow last night — page 50

Bid to stop time-wasting goalkeepers

Kit Shepard

An outfield player will have to leave the field for a minute when their team's goalkeeper receives treatment next season, as English football bids to end "goalkeeper timeouts".

The FA, Premier League, EFL and National League have agreed to the trial, which has been approved by the International Football Association Board (Ifab). The four English bodies join WSL Football, which decided last February to adopt the trial for next season in the top two women's tiers.

At present, goalkeepers do not have to leave the field if they receive on-pitch treatment from their physio — unlike outfield players. Consequently, goalkeepers could call for treatment to give their teams a break without losing a player for the next phase of the game.

Under the new law, if the goalkeeper signals for physio treatment, the team's coach would have ten seconds to nominate another player to leave the pitch for one minute. If no player is identified quickly enough, the captain must leave the field for a minute.

Goalkeeper timeouts stoked controversy last season. In March, Fabian Hürzeler, the Brighton & Hove Albion head coach, accused Arsenal of repeatedly running down the clock during his side's 1-0 defeat by the London club, and cited Arsenal's goalkeeper David Raya going down three times to allow his team-mates to receive instructions from coaching staff.

The previous November, the Leeds United head coach Daniel Farke called for a law change after implying that the Manchester City goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma went down with a "fake injury" that stunted his team's momentum in a 3-2 defeat at the Etihad.

Pro Ref (formerly PGMOL), the body responsible for professional refereeing, and the English leagues are conscious

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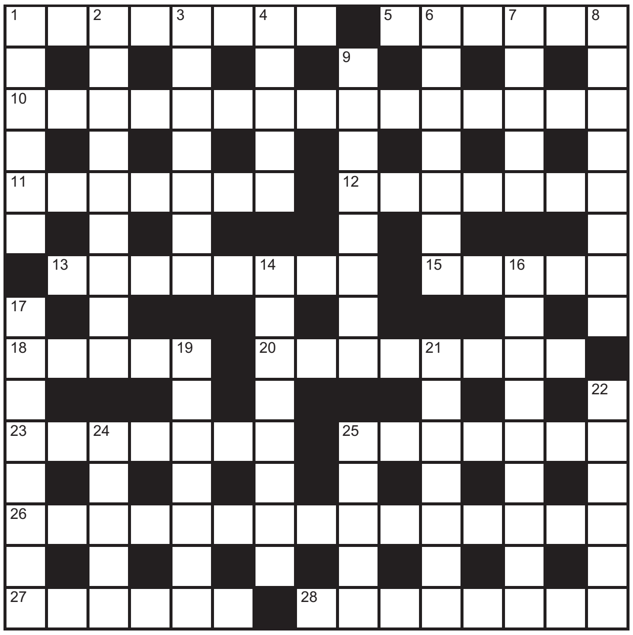
Times Crossword 29,606



ACROSS

1 Emu wants to transform, becoming this? (4,4)
5 Gossip good when appropriate (6)
10 Rules unfairly applied in tennis match, restricting quality (6,9)
11 Unearths former partner of philosopher (7)
12 Medical speciality doubled European understanding (7)
13 What troubles flesh or bay's rear? (8)
15 Restrained Republican newspaper commentary (5)
18 Serviceman giving up coat for senior citizen (5)
20 Regularly humbled rogue seeks illustrious techie (8)
23 Superseded instrument in fire ship from the east (7)
25 She released evil men held inside police car (7)
26 Deceived with myth on broadcast about one medieval work (3,6,6)
27 Two or three brought into Irish compound (6)
28 Spy husband in Paris securing cover for each revolutionary (4,4)

DOWN

1 Spooner's guided writer in selection of music (6)
2 Skill shown by driver with any luck (5,4)
3 Short sailor all but unsuitable for naval battle (7)
4 Unaltered having adopted parking orbit position (5)
6 Professional called to account in Listener (7)
7 Times perhaps writing about romantic figure (5)
8 Behave as faithful sweethearts? So get day fixed (2,6)
9 Judge an AA Milne character shunning love in classic (4,4)
14 Jet following unseats Mike in spectacular rise (8)
16 Flower power on the up must embrace hard facts (9)
17 Sister to volatile pre-Raphaelite founder (8)
19 British earl returned billions reportedly secured in current recession (3,4)
21 Travel north: see the sights of coastal city in boat (7)
22 Pascal, detective keeping your old documents (6)
24 Further attempt to support Conservative doctrine (5)
25 Religious work that is introduced to school organisation (5)

Yesterday's solution 29,605

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TIMES2

July 28 | **2026**

Jo Lydiard-Wilson with her family in Cotignac, Provence

Fire in paradise — we fled the French inferno

Sacked for wearing Lycra?! I sympathise with Mehmet the Mamil

Robert Crampton

Reluctant as I am to offend President Erdogan of Turkey, a man who hands out loaded revolvers as gifts to visiting world leaders, I don't think he should sack people for wearing cycling gear. But, funnily enough, the dead-eyed Anatolian strongman with the sinister moustache doesn't care what I think. Or if he does, he's working a complex double bluff.

Erdogan just binned a chap called Mehmet Fatih Cicekli, the now ex-governor of Ardahan province, because Mehmet, 50, a keen cyclist, couldn't stop posting Lycra-heavy selfies. "Here's me out for a pedal", "Here's me out for another pedal" etc, we've all met these guys, their obsession is tedious but harmless.

Mehmet the Mamil probably thought he was being suitably macho, showing off while promoting a healthy lifestyle, like Pete Hegseth and Robert F Kennedy doing their chin-ups at the Pentagon. But he took things a lunchbox too far. The side-parted suits in Ankara stuck a stick in his spokes, good and proper.

I sympathise with Mehmet the Municipal Mamil because something similar once happened to me. Well, not that similar, but never mind. Back in the early 1990s I used to wear cycling shorts at The Times. In those days commuting by bike was so eccentric that turning up in Lycra was equivalent to turning up in a wetsuit, or dressed as an astronaut. Thus my clothing was indulged for a while, possibly on mental health grounds, before it was eventually suggested that my chosen garb might not be a great career move. More on grounds of obscenity, I think, than the fact the snug fit undermined my status, because I didn't have any status. Needless to say, I got in line.

Still, 35 years later I have reverted to shorts at work, albeit of the baggy cotton variety, on the basis that, while I still don't have any status worth protecting, it's hot, and at almost 62 it doesn't matter. The fight goes on.

Mehmet Fatih Cicekli in his leggings

The fight, indeed, intensifies, because the backlash against informal dressing is not just confined to semi-dictatorships in the Near East. Look at the way President Zelensky was ambushed by that toady hack Brian Glenn in the Oval Office last year, taken to task for wearing his trademark military-style sweatshirt rather than a suit. When a guy is leading heroic national resistance to an invading tyrant, what does it matter what he wears? Zelensky's hosts should all wear green T-shirts to receive him, as a mark of respect.

Then there was Gianni Infantino at the World Cup final, brutally slagged off for teaming his suit with bright white trainers. Sure, the Fifa conehead is a wrong 'un, and the trainers were a terrible error, but not because they were casual, more because they were utterly heaving. Closer to home, much of the critique of Andy Burnham's nascent premiership has focused on his wardrobe. I tell you, sartorial revanchism is on the march!

It's bizarre, actually. Look at the Silicon Valley titans who rule the world: Zuckerberg, Bezos, Altman, the egregious Musk. One thing they've got in common, and the only thing I respect about them, is their commitment to studied informality, sustained by laid-back Californian culture. That culture served them well. In much of the world they would have been thwarted early doors for not wearing a tie.

Cipriani's wedding shocker

I'm rarely shocked any more by tales of celebrity greed, given that many people who become even a little bit famous think that means they don't ever have to pay for anything ever again. But the news of the former England rugby international Danny Cipriani asking guests to stump up for his wedding struck me as particularly venal.

Cipriani, who lives in Los Angeles and is reckoned to be worth about £4 million, is getting hitched to AnnaLynne McCord, an actress and model, also said to have amassed about £4 million. The soon-to-be happy couple recently posted a crowdfunding appeal inviting family and friends — and maybe deluded well-wishers — to chip in to cover the photography, the rehearsal dinner, the flowers, even the marriage licence. Super tacky!

The cake is priced at £450: is that the whole thing? A layer? Or just a slice? Tell you what, Cips, put me down for a dollar and make sure to send a few crumbs. A genius as a player, Cipriani remains a work in progress as a human being.

Blown away by response

Ljubisa Karovic, the man half sucked out of a plane this month, says he still hasn't heard from Ryanair, the airline he was on (and then, abruptly, half-on) when his window exploded on a flight from Greece to Germany. A combination of seatbelt, wife and other passengers grabbing his legs saved Karovic's life. He is still recovering from his injuries. Ryanair's comment after the incident? "A passenger requested medical attention."

Karovic's son, meanwhile, did get an email from the notoriously frugal operator… asking if his dad would like to rebook. Classy. Whether Ryanair offered to comp this second attempt to get to Germany, only without the 500mph blow-dry, is not known. It'd be a nice gesture if they had. Also: Michael O'Leary, I know you're tempted, but don't even think about trying to fine Karovic for trying to leave his seat while the seatbelt sign was illuminated.

How the Dragons' Den 'impostor' became the podcast king

Steven Bartlett's The Diary of a CEO looks set to become the world's most listened to show. Damian Whitworth charts the rise of the college dropout

Oh, how we sniggered. Earlier this year Steven Bartlett, the *Diary of a CEO* podcast bro, was widely derided for riding the wave of self-optimisation to a new height of self-parody.

A clip went viral in which the *Dragons' Den* star said that after drinking a couple of glasses of wine "it ruined three days of my life because of the domino effect it caused". He detailed how he got worse sleep that night, ate poorly the next day, struggled to do his podcast properly and — here it gets really tough — couldn't even go to the gym.

The mockers included Greg James, the Radio 1 DJ, who delivered a broadside against "optimisation" culture, the self-improvement trend. "Not everything has to be like work. You can be on, you can be off," James said. "This is my reminder to waste a day; optimisation is killing fun. We have to absolutely rail against that."

Well, it may not be clear how much fun Bartlett is having but he is certainly having extraordinary success. This week it was reported that he is on course to become the biggest beast in the podcasting jungle. Figures suggest he could overtake Joe Rogan, the American podcaster whose *Joe Rogan Experience* is the world's most listened to show. Between March and June *The Diary of a CEO* gained 2.8 million subscribers, taking Bartlett to 18.5 million. While Rogan is on 21 million, his growth was roughly flat.

A cause for celebration, then, if we didn't know by now that Bartlett is unlikely to make that mistake again. Still, for the 33-year-old it is vindication of a podcast that over almost a decade has created a blend that might be called extreme eclecticism — ranging from the world's most powerful people to former *Love Island* contestants, Matt Hancock and health cranks — but clearly appeals to listeners like no other British podcast.

Recent episodes of the show have included an interview last month with the American vice-president JD Vance, which included an update on Iran and was headlined "No one saw this coming, the ceasefire is real"; an interview with an entrepreneur who explained that the secret of making $100 million before turning 32 was "to stop letting them control me"; and the insights of an anti-ageing expert: "This reverses gray hair and boosts your energy!"

Bartlett, whose books *Happy Sexy Millionaire* and *The Diary of a CEO: The 33 Laws of Business and Life* have been huge bestsellers, and who has dismissed much of the rest of the British podcast scene as "dadcasting", is now highly focused on building his podcast in the US. His company uses technology that dubs his shows into several foreign languages and uses data to plot which guests and even which questions attract, or turn off, listeners.

Bartlett was born in Botswana to an illiterate Nigerian entrepreneur mother and a British father who was a civil engineer. The family moved to Plymouth when he was two. There, in a mostly white school, he felt conspicuous. "I was chemically relaxing my hair. I was making every attempt to be as white as I possibly could be," he once recalled. Now he

> “ Figures suggest he could overtake Joe Rogan, the US podcaster

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

has said: "I'm so proud to be black. When I was a kid I really struggled with it."

Although his mother's business ventures had mixed success and the family reportedly flirted with bankruptcy, he loved the idea of business from a young age. He minted his own paper currency at home and gave it to his older brothers, who would then "pay" him for massages. "I was doing that for fun at seven. I'm doing it for fun at 32. It's the same thing," he said last year.

He dropped out of Manchester Metropolitan University after the first day. "Looking around in my first lecture and seeing everyone hungover, no one actually cared about business, they were there because they didn't know what else to pick. The lecturer at the front was handing out felt-tips to make a poster for a hypothetical business. I just thought, 'This is awful and a waste of money.' University is a total scam for the vast majority of people," he once told The Times.

At 21 he cofounded Social Chain, a Manchester-based social media company. The company bought other websites, but just how big a tycoon Bartlett became has been a subject of some debate.

His website once suggested he had taken Social Chain public, in Germany, and that it had reached a market value of $600 million. In fact Social Chain was acquired in 2019 by a much larger German ecommerce business. When this was reported in 2023, Bartlett said that he retained a "significant" shareholding in the company Social Chain AG, and that he was under contract to work for the company "on a range of strategic matters" at the time of the $600 million valuation.

THE
JOE ROGAN

Joe Rogan. Top: Steven Bartlett and, top right, with JD Vance

What is undeniable is his astonishing ability to build his own brand. He started *The Diary of a CEO* in 2017, explaining the day-to-day struggles of a job he later said was "brutal". After a few episodes he started interviewing other executives and eventually a much wider range of guests.

Bartlett has said he regards himself as "a creator" rather than a businessman. "I'm not really like a businessperson in the typical sense. I'm not the numbers guy. I'm not the type of guy that's gonna figure out processes and operations. Obviously I know some of that stuff. Because how could I have got here without it? But it's not really quite what I am or what I do."

Steven.com, his holding company, was reportedly valued at £320 million. Along the way there have been some notable scoops on the podcast, including when Hancock came on to spill the beans, in toe-curling fashion, about his affair with his special adviser, Gina Coladangelo, during Covid lockdown. She was working to help him communicate in a more emotionally intelligent way and "we fell in love. And that's something that was completely outside my control," Hancock confessed as the nation squirmed. Interestingly, Bartlett later said that Hancock's team had approached him.

> “One criticism is that he doesn't interrogate guests robustly enough

Last year it was the turn of Michelle Obama to talk candidly about her marriage to Barack. "The beauty of my husband and our partnership is that neither one of us was ever really, ever going to quit at it, because that's not who we are," she told Bartlett. "And I know that about him. He knows that about me."

Bartlett has a trick of carefully maintaining eye contact and a gentle interviewing style. One of the criticisms of his podcasts is that he does not interrogate his guests robustly enough.

In 2024 an investigation by the BBC World Service accused Bartlett of spreading health-related misinformation in the podcast by allowing guests to make misleading claims, including that cancer could be cured by a high-fat diet.

At the time a spokesman for Flight Studio, a Bartlett company, told The Times: "Each guest episode is thoroughly researched prior to commission. [The podcast] offers guests freedom of expression... not just those [whose views] Steven and the team necessarily agree with."

Earlier that year the Advertising Standards Authority banned three Facebook adverts featuring Bartlett for advertising products from the brands Zoe and Huel without disclosing that he was an investor.

Richard Osman, the bestselling crime writer and *Rest Is Entertainment* podcaster, who has been on Bartlett's podcast, said on his own podcast this year that he was concerned that Bartlett's move into promoting wellness products could be potentially problematic at the BBC. "I love him on *Dragons' Den*, by the way, and I love *Dragons' Den*. I love that show. I really, really do. It feels like an accident waiting to happen."

Osman also revealed that guests on the show are given a custom photo book after their interview and that he was chauffeured to the recording in a car with "SB" monograms. He said that he had an interesting chat but added: "I absolutely felt like he was in therapy. I felt like a lot of the podcast was him asking questions and trying to work out who he was and that's absolutely fine by me."

Bartlett faced a significant backlash at the turn of the year after a podcast with Chris Williamson, a former *Love Island* contestant turned podcaster, who blamed "anti-family" sentiment among women for birth rate decline. Bartlett was accused of failing to challenge Williamson and of being a "Trojan horse for the manosphere".

His team pointed out that he is surrounded by female executives at his podcast and has many prominent women on his shows as guests. On the subject of the manosphere, Bartlett has previously said: "We need another model of what a man is — succeeding in whatever metric that men want to succeed, but in a way where they're being productive and healthy in society."

Bartlett is engaged to Melanie Vaz Lopes, a yogi and influencer who is "the opposite of me. Sweet, calm and composed", he told The Sunday Times. "I have this strong woman at home who will bring me back to what actually matters: has this dog been fed, have we had time together?"

When he joined *Dragons' Den* in 2021 he was the youngest investor and "felt like a massive impostor", he later recalled. "I'm sat next to Deborah Meaden and Peter Jones, who I've watched since I was 12. I felt like I had walked into the TV."

But he has never lacked ambition and has not been afraid to talk about where he wants his business to go. Last year he said of his podcast enterprise: "I think we'll build one of the most important media businesses in the world over the next 20 years."

Suddenly there was an inferno right in front of the house

As fires rage across southern France, Jo Lydiard-Wilson, 52, and her family went from lunch by the pool to fleeing hours later

Clockwise from top: Jo Lydiard-Wilson and her family; Lydiard-Wilson and her daughter, Millie; a firefighter near Cotignac. Below: Ira Szmek

We were sitting around the pool last week, about to open a bottle of rosé, when we saw it: a giant plume of grey smoke looming in the blue sky above us. My brother ran into the house and called the *pompiers*. Don't worry, they told us, we know about the wildfire in your area and it's under control — go back to your holiday.

So we did, enjoying lunch among the vineyards and hills that surround our house here in Cotignac, part of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region and widely recognised as one of the most beautiful villages in France. My husband, Christopher, and I live in Shepherds Bush in west London with our three children. We've been coming to Cotignac for 30 years and bought the house from my parents four years ago.

By 6pm that evening, things had started to change. The smoke was getting thicker and the air felt heavy. Unbeknown to us, since speaking to the *pompiers* the wind had changed.

Suddenly the Bessillon hill, where we often walk in the pine forests, caught on fire. There was an inferno in front of the house. It's been boiling for weeks, hotter than any of us can remember, and everything is very dry, so it just went up. Leo, the 13-year-old son of some British friends who live a mile away, rang, saying, "You've got to get out because our garden is on fire and there are massive flames coming towards your house." They fled in a panic, absolutely convinced their house had been destroyed.

We bunged a few bits in a suitcase, closed the shutters and turned off the gas. Our children — Millie, 20, Hector, 13, and Toby, 11 — were running around, grabbing their Nintendos and chocolate. Before we knew it, we were in the car speeding away. It was very frightening because we could see lots of satellite fires burning along the side of the road and huge fire trucks were racing towards our house. About a mile outside the town of Brignoles, where we'd found a hotel, we stopped the car and looked back. The sky was orange and people were just standing around staring in disbelief. It was like a disaster film.

Of course, I didn't sleep a wink. At 2.30am some friends with a holiday home on top of the hill messaged from England to say "we think it's gone". Irish friends messaged to say the same. At that point it felt inevitable that ours would be taken too.

The next morning we got hold of our neighbour, Simon, who said that our houses were still standing but the winds were high and we weren't out of trouble yet. When we tried to drive back, we were stopped and told it was still too dangerous.

We were constantly checking apps called things like Pyrowatch and scouring Facebook for information (although, of course, the kids were having the time of their lives while we worried). It was impossible to find out what was going on, not least because many of the telegraph poles had burnt down. We heard that the nearby village of Correns had been evacuated. It felt surreal. Just days earlier we'd been kayaking down the pristine river there, surrounded by otters, a stone's throw from Brad Pitt's Château Miraval winery.

On Friday we learnt that the fire had blown back into our area when the lady who'd made our curtains messaged "we're praying for you". We didn't hear anything else until Saturday afternoon, when we were finally allowed back, not knowing what we were going to find.

The land surrounding our house, ten metres behind the gas tank, is completely black. We've lost a couple of acres, including vineyards, but the garden survived. Lots of our neighbours lost theirs and Simon lost two cars. We've been lucky. Houses on the outskirts were burnt down but the amazing *pompiers* managed to protect the town and, believe it or not, we're all trying to get back to normal despite circling helicopters searching for the tiny satellite fires that keep breaking out.

We went out for drinks and dinner over the weekend and the market is still going. The area is usually packed with visitors at this time of year so it's important to support local businesses. And we're encouraging our friends and family to come — 15 of us are in the house (albeit we're still brushing ash outside) and we'll have rental guests here from August. The town is intact and the *pompiers* are keeping an eye on things, so in some ways it's never been safer.

As told to Claire Cohen

It will probably take years to rebuild

Ira Szmek, 43

Over the past week the inboxes of my travel site and Instagram (@lost_in_bordeaux) have been overflowing with messages. There are tourists worried about travelling to the region and Brits with second homes concerned about the wildfires.

I can understand why. From my home in the centre of Bordeaux, where I've lived for nine years with my partner and our three young children, you can feel the effects everywhere. Every afternoon the sky goes dark, ash falls from the sky and it's hard to breathe. Your hair and clothes are saturated with the smell of smoke and if you're outside for more than a few minutes you feel as though you're in the fire itself — and that's with it being 40 minutes' drive away from us in Cap Ferret. The heatwave that

SHUTTERSTOCK

came before it felt apocalyptic, like someone was burning you alive, and it seems to be getting worse each year. If we didn't have air conditioning in our house, I'm pretty sure we'd already have left.

Many of our neighbours, including some Brits, already have, especially the elderly and those with children. They've driven a couple of hours east to more rural areas, where they've been able to find last-minute places to stay. That's the advice I'm giving to those visitors already here who are messaging me in the hopes of relocating and continuing their holidays away from the fires.

Some are telling me that their hotels aren't responding and there's a lot of uncertainty. People are turning up to museums to find them closed. There's quite a bit of chaos. Many Brits are also sending me messages to say that they've lost their second homes in the affected regions. It's very sad to see your favourite places burn down and I feel the same — it will probably take years to rebuild.

> **Every afternoon the sky goes dark, ash falls and it's hard to breathe**

So should you come? The formal advice is not to visit the affected areas before the end of July. As for August? I'd say don't cancel yet. If you're staying near Cap Ferret then keep an eye on that and, yes, maybe move your trip. But if you're coming to the vineyards, for instance, that hasn't been affected. There's still a lot to do that hasn't been touched by the fire.
As told to Claire Cohen

I'm getting a divorce — but what do I call myself now?

Lisa Dawson has separated from her husband. As her passport is up for renewal, she's in a prefix conundrum

TOM JACKSON FOR THE TIMES MAGAZINE

Lisa Dawson

Last week I went to the Passport Office in Durham because I needed a new passport at the last minute before going to Greece. It had become an issue because I hadn't realised that the need to renew is based on the issue date, not the expiry date (try and make sense of that). I decided to take the train, and spent the entire journey annoyed that the new passport would need to be in my married name because I am not yet divorced.

I separated from my estranged husband ten months ago and had been thinking a lot about how I was going to move forward, namewise. At the moment my prefix is Mrs and I have my husband's name but, frustratingly, that name is also my business. Then I got even more annoyed that I had taken my husband's name to start with. I should have kept my unmarried name and started my interiors business using that. Why hadn't I done this?

This sent me down a dismal patriarchal path of thoughts around the fact that I have been using Mrs and my husband's surname without considering the reasons. Which is astonishing really.

Clarity comes as we age and learn, and when I got married at 30 I was looking forward to a forever partnership and children. In all honesty I was just really happy about it all and the implications of the label didn't really occur to me. I was young and, apparently, naive. Fast forward 25 years and it's not quite so happy ever after, but I am now in a position where I need to make decisions about what I want to be called in the future. Single woman, soon to be divorced, three almost adult kids, a dog and a cat. I will no longer be a married woman so why would I need to keep my estranged husband's name? The fact is that I don't but my entire career is based on it. Urgh.

I posted my wrath in an Instagram story, mostly to warn people that if they were starting a business to think carefully about the name they used — no one knows what's going to happen in the future (I know, I'm such a ray of sunshine). However, the reaction I received in response was quite frankly insane.

Not even when my husband left me did so many people message me. It was crazy. Almost all had strong thoughts about the marital prefix system and why it should be abolished. Had I been sleepwalking for the past quarter of a century? Why had I merrily entered into an antiquated marital naming system that was entirely based on a man's ownership of a woman with no consideration whatsoever? I was furious with the young me but, at the same time, knew I was not alone in jumping in.

I would say that 85 per cent of the women who messaged me had not taken their husband's name. The remaining 15 per cent had done so but almost purely because they had children and wanted everyone in the family to have the same name. But the most interesting fact is that almost all of the thousands who messaged me did not use Mrs but Ms. As a Seventies child, the prefix Ms has always had "unmarried grumpy spinster" connotations for me. Why are older women who have never married called spinsters while older unmarried men are named bachelors? Bachelor sounds fun and happy-go-lucky, and recalls bachelor parties, bachelor pads, a positive state of being. But spinster? It even sounds wrinkly.

I'd already been riled by Virgin Media, which transferred my broadband into my name from my estranged husband's only to query why I used Mrs, since my husband had told them we were divorcing. Why is it your business? It's literally nothing to do with you, love. Would you ask a man his marital status? No. No, you would not. So why are you asking mine?

> **In the UK every form you fill in still has marital indicative pronouns to tick**

This is a subject I have never really considered before, which is shocking in itself, but oh, it's a big one. "Maiden" names. Fathers handing over daughters to husbands in marriage ceremonies. The wearing of white dresses to show we are unblemished. Taking our husband's name to show ownership. "Miss" to show you have not yet been lucky enough to find a man and that you're available for courting. "Mrs" to say well done — peak success as a woman achieved.

The rest of Europe doesn't tolerate this. Mademoiselle was removed from French documentation in 2012 and the only term used is Madame. In Germany they solely use Frau, and Fräulein is considered inappropriate for modern use. In Poland Pani is used for all adult women as a sign of respect, the old term of Panna signifying that you are unmarried having been dropped some time ago.

It is surely time to get with the programme here in the UK, where every form you fill in still has marital indicative pronouns to tick. In many cases you are unable to complete a form without doing so.

So what is my plan? The problem with starting a business in your married name is that changing back to your unmarried name is hard (SEO, books written, blah blah blah). But I feel this is an essential part of my move forward into a new life, and I'm going to bite the bullet over the next 18 months and make the swap to my unmarried name. In the meantime? It's Ms all the way.

Spider-Man is worried about tick bites and you should be too

Dr Mark Porter

Ticks are bothering me this week. Well, our dog Sid anyway, from whom I have just removed three. And it seems they are bothering the *Odyssey* star Tom Holland and his wife, Zendaya, too, after reports that they have asked for the long grass to be cordoned off at Belvoir Castle, where they are apparently holding their post-wedding party.

One can only imagine why guests would wander off into the rough at such a glamorous do, but I am guessing it won't be to pick up one of the ticks that live there — or a disease that their bites can pass on. And not just Lyme disease but a much rarer condition — alpha-gal syndrome — that can lead to a serious, sometimes life-threatening allergy to meat and dairy products.

I suspect I had Lyme disease in 1992 before most doctors in the UK were familiar with the bacterial infection and its symptoms. I had been bitten after walking in rural Portugal, and three weeks later developed the classic bull's-eye rash on my thigh. No one knew what it was but, fortunately, as it turned out, I went on to develop peritonitis from a ruptured appendix and was put on intravenous antibiotics. These would have wiped out any *Borrelia* bacteria injected into me by the tick, preventing future complications ranging from joint pain and fatigue to the heart problems some people develop. Every cloud has a silver lining.

However, those serendipitous antibiotics would not have prevented me from developing alpha-gal syndrome. Rather than a bacterial infection, alpha-gal, otherwise known as mammalian meat allergy, is triggered by the body's immune response to a sugar molecule found in the saliva of some species of tick. This can sensitise the individual to subsequent exposure to the same sugar, which, although it doesn't occur naturally in humans and other higher primates, is found in many other mammalian meats, including beef, lamb and pork, and associated products such as dairy.

Some medicines derived from mammals or containing additives such as gelatin can also trigger a reaction. Examples include the monoclonal antibody cetuximab, which is derived from mice and used to treat cancer, the anticoagulant heparin and vaccines including the nasal spray for flu and the older shingles type Zostavax (the later version Shingrix is fine).

Once sensitised — and not all those bitten will be — further exposure can trigger a delayed allergic reaction, typically two to eight hours after eating meat, that can range from an itchy rash and vague abdominal bloating and discomfort to full-blown, and potentially lethal, anaphylaxis, where the individual collapses and struggles to breathe. It's exactly the sort of severe reaction people with allergies can get after exposure to triggers such as peanuts, antibiotics and wasp stings. However, because alpha-gal reactions typically strike in the middle of the night, hours after supper, the link to food is easily missed.

The syndrome is much more common in America, where it is mainly associated with the lone star tick found there. Data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest there were 110,000 suspected new cases in America between 2010 and 2022, but this is likely to be an underestimate, with modelling suggesting that as many as 450,000 people may be affected.

We don't have the lone star tick here in the UK, nor any official statement on the incidence of alpha-gal here other than that it is "very rare". However, it is carried by the same species of sheep and deer tick that can spread Lyme disease in the UK and could well be more common than we think, albeit still rare.

> “Alpha-gal syndrome can lead to a serious allergy

Anyone with suspected alpha-gal syndrome should be referred to an allergy specialist, and the diagnosis is confirmed using a blood test that looks for the specific IgE antibodies responsible. Treatment, as with most allergies, rests on careful avoidance of mammalian meat — such as beef, lamb and pork — and related products, although many people can continue to eat dairy. Anyone at risk of anaphylaxis should carry an adrenaline pen.

The allergy can get better with time, with some people able to gradually reintroduce mammalian products, but for others it will be lifelong. Repeated tick bites can exacerbate and prolong the syndrome.

Poultry such as chicken, duck and turkey are safe, as are fish and shellfish, although there have been reports of reactions after exposure to some types of fish roe, albeit not caviar (that I can find). Which brings me back to the Holland-Zendaya party.

I can't be the only one to pick up on the irony of an actor who has made millions playing a character — Spider-Man — whose superhero powers are the result of a spider bite, going the extra mile to prevent his guests from being bitten by another arachnid. And I feel duty bound to warn guests that ticks don't hide only in long grass.

What to do if you are bitten by a tick

- **Remove it as soon as possible using fine tweezers or a tick removal device such as a slotted card. Go as close to the skin as possible and pull firmly upwards.**
- **Clean the area with an antiseptic or soap and water.**
- **Monitor the area for the next few weeks and report any symptoms suggestive of Lyme disease, such as flu-like symptoms or a rash (it won't always be the spreading "bull's-eye" type) to your doctor.**
- **Most people won't have any problems, and the latest Nice guidance does not recommend routine prescription of "just-in-case" antibiotics after a tick bite.**

For more information search "Lyme disease" at ukhsa.blog.gov.uk and visit gov.uk/guidance/alpha-gal-syndrome

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Save your brain

Restricting one's eating window may reduce the risk of dementia, a new study suggests. The experts tell Antonia Hoyle the most mindful practice to adopt

As a weight-loss strategy, of course, it isn't new. Whether the 5:2 diet, in which followers restrict calories for two days a week, the 16:8 diet, where eating is restricted to an eight-hour window, or even the OMAD (one meal a day diet), the benefits and risks of intermittent fasting, or time-restricted eating (TRE), have been well documented.

However, it's not only our waistlines that are affected. Yesterday research found limiting food to a nine-hour window each day — and not eating for four hours before bed — may be linked to a reduced risk of dementia in overweight women. Researchers at Rutgers University in New Jersey asked overweight or obese participants to cut their daily intake by 500 calories, with half also restricting their eating to a nine-hour window.

After six months all had lost about a stone but those who'd eaten in a nine-hour window, most of whom finished eating at 6pm, made fewer mistakes in memory and learning tests.

Losing weight through any method is thought to help limit age-related cognitive decline but, the study lead Dr Sue Shapses said, "Reduction in the eating window predicted greater improvements." So why can cutting the periods in which we eat be good for our brain and body? And, crucially, how can those of us for whom evenings on the sofa are synonymous with the biscuit tin manage it?

What happens to our body when we limit our food intake to specific periods?

Consuming three meals and regular snacks keeps us in a "fed state", constantly burning food for energy, explains Dr Adam Collins, associate professor of metabolic nutrition at the University of Surrey. Taking a break from food means "you're resting and repairing tissues" in a process known as autophagy, during which insulin and blood-sugar levels fall.

Signalling pathways such as m-TOR, which promotes healthy cell growth but is also linked to an increased risk in cancer, become less active. The body not only starts using stored energy (fat) as fuel but gets rid of damaged proteins in cells and clears out inefficient mitochondria, which produce cells' energy.

Why is this good for our brain?

Brain cells also contain mitochondria and rely on glucose for energy, says Collins, and fasting triggers cell adaptation, making them more efficient. "Anything you can do to make them more efficient is obviously going to be better from a cognitive point of view."

With age, a cell's mitochondria become less efficient. Fasting "is a way you can repair that or clear the decks ready to build another one", he says. There is some evidence that fasting may also increase production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein that encourages neuroplasticity and supports learning and memory, although more research is needed. "Fasting could be beneficial for mental health because of the effects of that," Collins adds. "You're going to create a different hormonal milieu in a fasted state."

Are there any other benefits?

Yes — you're improving overall "metabolic resilience", Collins says. Lower insulin levels and less stressed mitochondria as a result of TRE may reduce inflammation linked to myriad diseases, from cardiovascular disease to some cancers and autoimmune disease. A study in BMC Medicine found a six-hour eating window inhibited lung cancer progression in mice, but more research is needed in humans. "It is a signal of excess, being in a state of inflammation," he says.

What's the minimum time we need to stop eating for?

The evidence isn't yet clear in humans, with most of the research to date conducted on animals, but Collins says "you probably need to allow yourself at least ten hours of fasting. Your fed state is usually about four hours. But you don't go straight from fed to fasted — there's a period called the post-absorptive state which can last another six hours". Glucose and protein clear from the food we eat first, he says, but "the fat takes longer".

What time of day is it best to restrict eating to?

The earlier the better. This year a systematic review of 41 studies in BMJ Medicine found those who had their last meal before 5pm lost more weight and gained better blood-sugar control than those who ate their last meal after 7pm. Researchers from this week's study believe the time we eat might influence the circadian rhythms that control our body temperature, sleep and hormone levels. "We are diurnal animals, designed to feed and forage during the day and rest and digest at night," Collins says. "So if you're eating quite late at night your ability to deal with things is not as good." But he accepts, "it's probably easier for people to start eating later [in the day] rather than stop eating earlier. There's still a benefit to that".

What's the link between TRE and sleep?

Eating earlier in the evening can make it easier to nod off, says the nutritionist Laura Southern, founder of London Food Therapy, who usually restricts her eating from 6.30pm to

— stop late-night snacking

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8am and encourages clients to do the same. “Stopping eating three or four hours before bed is one of the best supportive interventions you can make for your digestive and metabolic health and sleep. Eat too close to bedtime and our body is either too busy digesting food to repair overnight or it might struggle to effectively digest your food. And if you go to sleep with high blood sugar your body may release stress hormones to try and stabilise them, which could cause you to wake up in the middle of the night with a racing mind.”

What’s the optimum window?

While the BMJ review found people with an eating window under eight hours, perhaps predictably, lost most weight and fat, they also lost more lean muscle than those with a larger window. And the smaller the window, the less sustainable it is. This month a systematic review in the journal Nutrition Reviews found the 16:8 led to improved insulin sensitivity, and last month a study by the University of Granada revealed that limiting food to an eight-hour window can also help maintain weight loss in overweight or obese adults for 12 months.

A 2019 study in the journal Cell Metabolism, meanwhile, found participants on a 10-hour window for 12 weeks reduced their weight and blood pressure. There’s no need to go to extremes, Collins says: “Anything that causes a bit of metabolic stress will trigger some of the repair mechanisms and adaptation.”

How should I get started?

Gradually, Collins says: “If your eating window is currently 16 hours, break it down to 14 hours and then 12 hours.” So dinner might be at 7pm, breakfast at 7am. “You don’t have to go straight to eight or nine hours a day. Whatever you do to lengthen that period is going to be beneficial [and] change priorities from using fresh fuels to using your own stores and allow that spring cleaning.”

Does it matter what order I eat food in my eating window?

Try and eat foods high in starchy carbohydrates — porridge and wholemeal toast, for example — early in your window, Southern says: “We’re more insulin sensitive earlier in the day so can handle sugar more effectively, moving glucose out of our blood to our cells to provide energy.”

She suggests we balance those carbs with protein — add seeds to your porridge or peanut butter to toast, for example — to avoid blood-sugar spikes. “Carbohydrates are fine to eat throughout the rest of the window but prioritise wholegrain, such as lentils and brown rice, rather than white pasta, to avoid blood-sugar spikes.”

What are the risks of TRE?

A 2024 systematic review in Nutrition Journal found intermittent fasting was commonly associated with fatigue, headaches, gastrointestinal symptoms and dizziness, and “anyone who has some form of disordered eating” may be unsuited to it, Collins says, although this is more problematic with “an all or nothing approach” than a moderate ten-hour eating window.

“The other thing to consider is you’ve got more pressure on the times you do eat to be nutritionally complete. You can’t just eat rubbish for eight hours.” His university is recruiting for a randomised controlled trial of TRE in older adults with or without protein. There is a “potential worry” they won’t get enough, he says.

“Our study is looking at whether we can use supplements of protein in addition to time-restricted eating to see whether that changes their body composition.” A healthy dose of cynicism is probably also helpful: this year a systematic review found that TRE didn’t lead to significantly greater weight loss than conventional diets.

> “If your eating window is currently 16 hours, break it down to 14 hours and then 12 hours

How do I stop eating at night?

If it’s a sweet treat you’re craving, have it earlier in the day, suggests Southern, who often enjoys a biscuit at about 4pm. “Then you won’t feel you’ve denied yourself later on.” Often, we associate evening snacks with relaxation. “If it’s a hand-to-mouth action you need think of something else you can do with your hands, whether crochet or a jigsaw.”

Tea and coffee are fine to drink with milk outside your eating window — “this whole scaremongering that it’s going to break your fast is nonsense,” Collins says — while Southern recommends herbal tea for comfort and distraction. If you must eat before bed, she says, make it something that won’t send blood sugar soaring, such as oatcakes and almond butter.

Can I still have a social life?

Yes! “Try meeting friends at 6pm after work,” Southern says. “You can have a glass of wine and dessert without impacting your sleep. Eating earlier will allow time for your blood-sugar level to lower, which makes sleep easier, and make it more likely that you will move — be it walking home or to the station, which also lowers blood-sugar levels.”

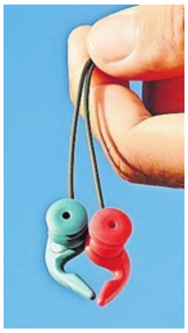
How I lost my hearing, aged 44

Patrick McAleenan

In 2012 I ran the London Marathon. Like most amateur runners, I worked my way up from 10Ks to halves to the full 26.2 miles, clocking up long runs in the dark after work and on Sunday mornings. Headphones were my constant companion. I’d crank up the volume, convinced I needed the heavy beat to keep me going. At the time it felt harmless.

Now, on most mornings, I wake to the cries of seagulls and a loud ringing in my ears. The birds are expected — I live on the coast — as is the high-pitched whine layered over them. That’s tinnitus, which I’ve had for more than a decade. Unlike the seagulls, it’s there because of me.

I ignored the warning signs. After some of those running sessions I’d finish with my ears buzzing. The ringing would fade after a few hours. Then one day it didn’t.



The noise stayed — not deafening, but a persistent hiss. My first hearing test, at 44, revealed I had damaged my eardrums irreparably. Now in my fifties, I live with tinnitus and steadily deteriorating hearing. I’m not the only one. Last year a pilot study carried out by the UK National Eye-Health and Hearing Study (UKNEHS) found that three in four Britons aged 50 and over — 20.3 million people — suffer from some form of hearing loss in one or both ears.

For me, there was no dramatic drop in clarity. It was more a case of noticing myself asking, “Sorry, what?” a bit more often. Untreated, it seeps into every part of life. Dating, for example, becomes more complicated when you can’t follow conversations easily in a busy bar. Reports from The Lancet in 2020 and 2024 identified untreated hearing loss in midlife as the largest modifiable risk factor for dementia.

But there is some good news. The first is that getting your hearing checked is simple. A high street test takes minutes and gives you a baseline, so you can see if there’s an issue. Small interventions also make a real difference. Proper earplugs, not the free foam ones but those designed for gigs and running, and keeping headphones at sensitive levels (and giving your ears breaks) really helps.

My hearing is still proficient but I feel myself edging closer to the day I’ll need hearing aids.

Thinking back to when I first laced up my running shoes and shoved in my headphones, I wish someone had told me to turn down those euphoric playlists.

The chronic pain you're feeling — could it be an emotional injury?

Aches aren't always from physical trauma, Dr Howard Schubiner tells Elisabeth Perlman

How important is the connection between mind and body? Profoundly, according to Dr Howard Schubiner. In his two decades as a professor of medicine, he has treated countless patients for whom the traditional biomedical approach, as he calls it, which looks for structural damage to fix, simply didn't work.

So what was the explanation? Unresolved emotional pain is at the heart of some people's conditions, he tells me over Zoom from Michigan, where he is director of the Mind Body Medicine Center at Ascension Providence Hospital. That's possible, he says, because "the parts of the brain that are activated when you have a physical injury are the same parts of the brain that are activated when you have an emotional injury."

This "is not about curing cancer, heart disease, diabetes, dementia or Parkinson's disease", he insists — but some ailments can be "neuroplastic" in nature, including chronic neck and back pain, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), tension and migraine headaches, pelvic pain syndromes, temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorders, dizziness and tinnitus.

Schubiner has experience of this, having suffered neck pain at a point in his life when he was overwhelmed by stress. "The MRI of my neck showed three bulging discs and evidence of arthritis," he writes in his recent book, *Unlearn Your Pain*, but after attending a mindfulness retreat his discomfort improved, only to return a month or two later. "If the pain was due to bulging discs and arthritis, why wasn't it there all the time? Was it stress building up in my life that triggered the attacks? Was there a correlation between my meditation practice and a reduction in neck pain? Maybe."

Schubiner reflected on this after reading *The Mindbody Prescription* by Dr John Sarno, a rehabilitation specialist who observed that some patients suffered intense back pain despite having only mild abnormalities on scans, while others with severe imaging abnormalities felt none at all.

Only when physical damage, tumours, acute infections, nerve damage or an autoimmune disease are discounted by a medical evaluation can you look at whether a patient has a history of other neuroplastic conditions, childhood trauma or significant life stress that correlates with the symptom onset, Schubiner says. "I never want to mistake a physical disease for a neuroplastic condition. That error is one that no physician ever wants to make."

> "When faced with physical or emotional danger, the brain warns us

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Why an MRI showing abnormalities may be less conclusive than you think

In 2015 Waleed Brinjikji and colleagues from the Mayo Clinic published their analysis of MRI data from 33 studies in the American Journal of Neuroradiology. Of 3,110 people who reported no back pain, disc degeneration was found in 37 per cent of asymptomatic 20-year-olds and 96 per cent of asymptomatic 80-year-olds. "Imaging findings of spine degeneration are present in high proportions of asymptomatic individuals," the researchers wrote. "Many imaging-based degenerative features are likely part of normal ageing and unassociated with pain."

Why pain signals may go awry

"When faced with a critical amount of either physical or emotional danger, the brain is likely to warn us, much like a smoke alarm warns us of fire," Schubiner writes in his book. He cites studies showing that emotional distress — such as looking at a photograph of an ex-partner after a recent break-up — activates the same pain-processing regions in the brain as physical injuries.

How do you respond to pain?

Most people with neuroplastic pain react to symptoms with the 7 Fs, Schubiner says.

- Fear: worrying about them.
- Focus: frequently monitoring them.
- Fight: resisting them.
- Frustrate: getting angry at them.
- Figure them out: internet searching, seeing more doctors or other healthcare practitioners.
- Fix them: which, when unsuccessful over time, makes the symptoms more persistent.
- Forlorn: getting upset about the symptoms.

Why you may be prone to a neuroplastic condition

According to a study from the 1990s, adults who suffer traumatic events in childhood have a much higher chance of developing chronic pain as well as anxiety and depression. But Schubiner cautions: "You don't have to be exposed to major trauma in childhood to develop significant neuroplastic conditions in later life. Children who are feeling fearful of going to school because they miss a parent, feel alone or are being bullied can develop neuroplastic symptoms of abdominal pain, headaches..."

He says certain personality traits such as perfectionism and intense self-criticism may make people more prone to developing neuroplastic conditions.

Schubiner assesses whether or not a patient meets the "Fit" criteria. The pain is "functional" if symptoms affect the function, not the structure of the area — eg, if after an injury pain persists long after the wound should have healed. The pain is "inconsistent" if it shifts locations or varies based on the time of day or stress levels. The pain is "triggered" if it's activated by anticipating a stressful event or by innocuous stimuli like a specific smell.

Schubiner sometimes uses "provocative testing", getting patients to imagine doing a triggering activity and that alone causes discomfort. This demonstrates that a learnt neural circuit, not a physical injury, is to blame for generating the symptom.

The power of PRT

Pain reprocessing therapy (PRT) is an evidence-based treatment by which patients can "unlearn" chronic pain that has no medical explanation.

Schubiner cites a study showing how self-affirmations can change the brain by reducing its perception of threat and suggests asking yourself "what's wrong with me?" and answering "nothing!" and repeating affirmations such as "I am healthy. I am strong".

Another part of PRT is somatic tracking, a form of mindfulness, developed by the psychotherapist Alan Gordon. "It's about trying to separate from the pain, trying to be indifferent, trying to be curious, trying to be playful, trying to be anything that changes the brain from the fear cycle to the safety cycle," Schubiner says.

Another element of PRT is gradual exposure to pain triggers and physical activity. While it's not a good idea to push yourself too much, try to do the activity whether symptoms occur or not, which Schubiner refers to as "outcome independence".

How to learn to let it go

Self-compassion can be an important part of the healing process, Schubiner believes. He co-developed a therapy that can be used to address the underlying causes that sensitised the danger signal in the first place.

"Patients are encouraged to recall a conflict, a person or a situation to experience, express and resolve emotions including anger, guilt and sadness," he writes in his book. "The emotional expression is done in their imagination... This process avoids and actively discourages real life anger or violence, which typically leads to escalating conflicts."

He describes the approach as: "You imagine it, you feel it, you express it, you let it go."

***Unlearn Your Pain* by Howard Schubiner (£18.99 Ebury). To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk. Free UK standard P&P on orders over £25. Special discount available for Times+ members.**

> "Try asking yourself 'what's wrong with me?' and answering 'nothing!'

ALAMY; THESTEWARTOFNY, IAN COOK/GETTY IMAGES

Hey! That's me in your new novel

Rachel Cusk is under fire for her book about an actress uncannily similar to her friend Natalie Portman. She's not the first to plunder from real life, says John Self

Last week Rachel Cusk made the news for apparently basing a character in her new novel on the actress Natalie Portman. *Life of M*, which is published at the end of August, is about an actress with several similarities to Portman who allows a friend to write her biography but is unhappy with the results. "You've made it seem like I lack humanity... You've made it seem like I'm unable to love," M says. Aptly enough, some reports suggest that Portman is "devastated" and "outraged" by the book, while others insist there are no hard feelings.

Portman and Cusk have known one another for years, and Portman described Cusk as "one of my favourite writers". There are certainly points of correspondence between Portman and M in the book. *Life of M* tells us that the actress played a ballerina and is "the model for a major brand" (check: Portman was in the film *Black Swan* and is the face of Miss Dior) and that "her first film originally included several scenes in which the child was shown wanting or inviting sexual interaction with the central male character" (check: Portman's debut *Leon* in 1994 had scripted scenes of her with an adult male, which were cut at her mother's request).

Cusk has remained tight-lipped, in keeping with her austere authorly persona. Still, it's handy to be in the headlines when you have a new book coming out and this isn't the first time Cusk has exercised her prerogative to put whoever she likes into her books. This can have consequences. "She torches people and moves on," said one literary critic. Her divorce memoir *Aftermath* (2012) detailed her ex-husband's faults — he gave up work to look after their children and she is scornful of his "dependence" and "unwaged domesticity".

Her bracingly honest *A Life's Work* (2001) was about the challenges brought on by parenting her two daughters — "I greeted my old cell with the cheerless acceptance of a convict intercepted at large," she writes when she discovers she is pregnant again. And in her essay collection *Coventry* (2019), targets ranged from her parents (who had stopped speaking to her — hence the title) to an airport official who has the cheek to wear a "synthetic shirt, black synthetic trousers [and] a cheap tie".

It has reached the stage, in fact, where an effective modern curse might be "May you appear in a Rachel Cusk book". But she is only the latest in a long line of writers who got into hot water by apparently putting real people in their work.

Philip Roth was a master of creating literary halls-of-mirrors from real life, putting versions of himself in books like *The Ghost Writer*, *The Facts* and *Operation Shylock*. But it was when he cast a thinly disguised avatar of his wife, Claire Bloom, in his 1990 novel *Deception* — a story told mostly in dialogue before and after sex — that he got into trouble. After their inevitable divorce, Bloom took revenge with a memoir, *Leaving a Doll's House* (1996), resulting in a feud so explosive even the arch-gossip Gore Vidal washed his hands of it. "It's always best to stay out of other people's divorces," he declared. "And their civil wars."

But Roth wasn't done, and twisted the knife again with his later novel *I Married a Communist* (1998). The book was, said the novelist Linda Grant, "an angry, bitter, resentful mess" — but also a final victory of sorts. After all, she added, "it's not like Claire Bloom has another book in her".

Nora Ephron is best known for spiky romantic comedies such as *When Harry Met Sally* but when she published a novel, *Heartburn* (1983), she based it on her marriage to the journalist Carl Bernstein, which broke down after he had an affair with Margaret Jay, the daughter of the British prime minister James Callaghan. Perhaps she underestimated the resources of the reporter who jointly uncovered the Watergate scandal: Bernstein threatened to sue, and meant it. In the end it took the couple five years to agree terms for their divorce and about half the time was taken satisfying Bernstein's demands for script approval over how he would be portrayed (by Jack Nicholson) in the film adaptation of *Heartburn*.

Sometimes a writer knows they're courting disaster but thinks they can charm their way out of it. So it was with Truman Capote, then America's favourite literary miniature, who — struggling to follow up the success of *In Cold Blood* — in 1975 began serialising in Esquire magazine stories about his upper-class social circle, including their bathroom and bedroom habits. "They're too dumb. They won't know who they are." Wrong again! Capote was cut off from the oxygen of the New York scene. "He was only an ornament," one friend observed. "There was nothing for him to fall back on." Capote never completed another book. And the greatest shame of all? The stories he published in Esquire weren't even very good.

Philip Roth with his wife, Claire Bloom, in the 1990s. Top: Rachel Cusk and Natalie Portman

The novelist Amanda Craig had a nerve-jangling experience when in 1996 her ex-boyfriend, the literary critic David Sexton, threatened to sue over what he claimed were similarities between him (including the make of shoes he wore) and a cruel, debauched book-reviewer character in Craig's soon-to-be-published satire *A Vicious Circle*. Despite Craig's editor saying "nobody but a lunatic" would claim to be one of Craig's characters, her publisher got cold feet and cancelled publication. Craig revised parts of the novel and the book was taken up by a new publisher, with the stern warning that "any resemblance of the satirical archetypes in *A Vicious Circle* to real-life people and events is not only wholly unintended but entirely wrong".

Cusk's alleged traducement is perhaps closer in spirit to that which the novelist Julie Myerson was accused of when in 2009 she published a book titled *The Lost Child*. It brought together historical examples of parent-and-child struggles with her own experience of her 17-year-old son's addiction to "skunk" cannabis. (Myerson later threw him out of the family home.) Uproar ensued when Myerson's son gave an interview denying he was an addict, rejecting claims that he had agreed to the book's publication and calling his parents "slightly insane" into the bargain. Myerson's publisher did what any responsible publisher would do: they brought forward publication of the book to capitalise on the controversy.

> “
> **Cusk torches people and moves on, said one literary critic**

Sometimes, however, the inclusion of a real person in a novel is largely accidental. On April Fool's Day in 1992, the novelist DJ Taylor took an anxious phone call from his editor. "If you've got any property or savings," he was told, "I should put them in your wife's name." Taylor had just published his second novel, *Real Life*, and had borrowed a character's name from someone he met at a party years before. The trouble was that the character was, er, a porn baron and associate of the Kray twins. Following a legal to-and-fro, Taylor's book was pulped, then reissued with a disclaimer, and he and his publisher jointly shelled out a five-figure sum to quell the man's outraged feelings.

Ian McEwan, however, got away with it when he wrote his Booker winner *Amsterdam* and used the name Julian Garmony for the politician at the centre of a sex scandal. It was a "curious" surname that McEwan came across when he temporarily had neighbours called Garmony — who turned out to be "very upset" when the book came out — "but I just wanted a lovely unusual name!" McEwan explained. No action was taken but, if it's any consolation to the Garmonys, wherever they are, McEwan "always feel[s] a bit sad about it".

And just as Cusk has at least earned some publicity for her new book, there is often a silver lining in these cases. Earlier this year an excellent novel called *A Domestic Animal* by the English writer Francis King was reissued. But when the book was first published in 1969, it was the subject of legal threats from an MP, Tom Skeffington-Lodge, on whom King had based one of his characters, a politician desperate for a peerage. The book was withdrawn and King had to sell his home to cover the legal costs. But there was one upside: he wrote a novel, *The Action*, about the whole ordeal. Writers, as I say, are terrible magpies.

times2

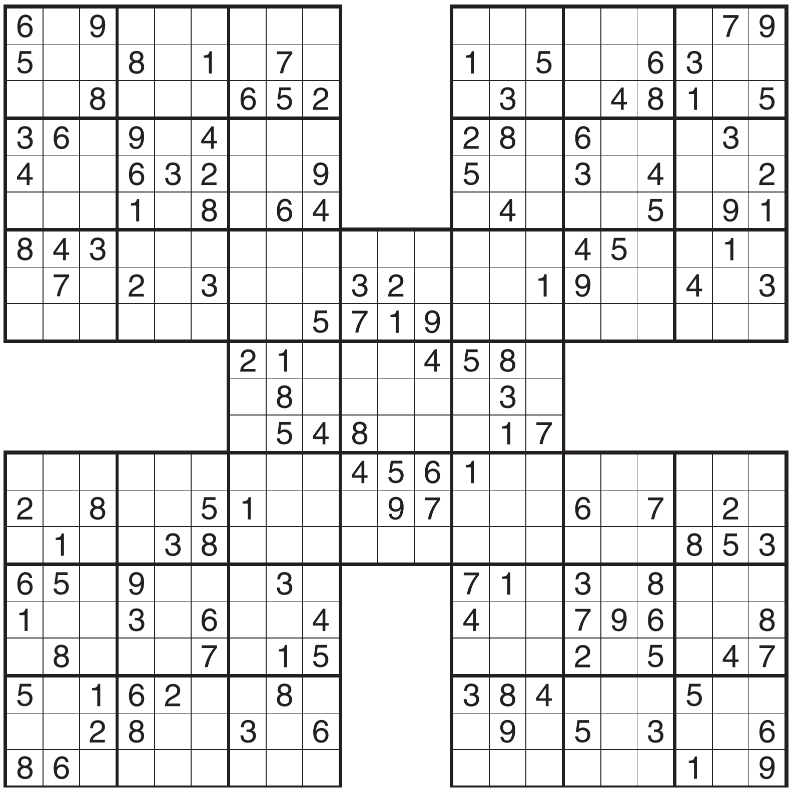
Your weekday brain boost

More puzzles
Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai medium

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

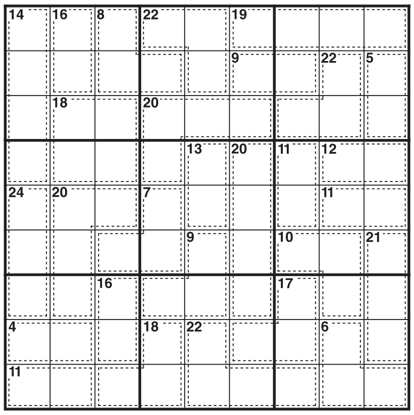


Sudoku fiendish

	2		3	5	1		6	
			8		6			7
	6	1				8	2	
	3				8			5
	5	4		1		6		
			5		9			
	4		7					
		3		6				9

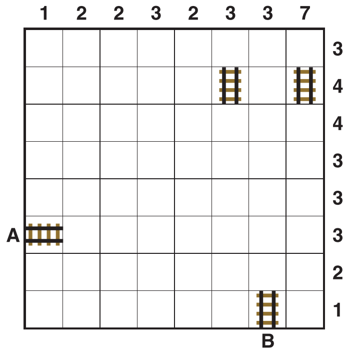
Killer tricky

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.



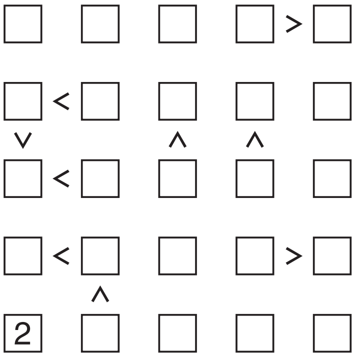
Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

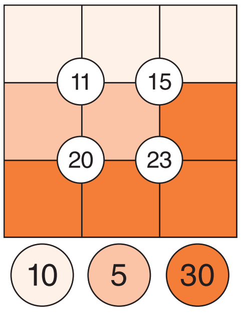


Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.



Sakuro

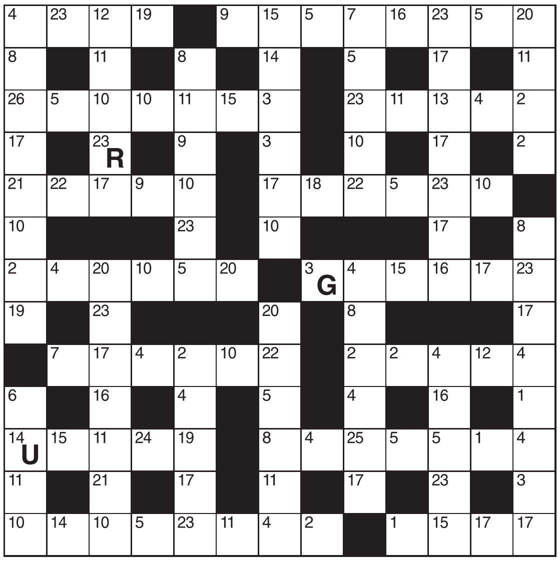


Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Play Mini Sudoku every day Monday-Sunday online at thetimes.com and on Live app

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.



A B C D E F ~~G~~ H I J K L M N O P Q ~~R~~ S T ~~U~~ V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		G										

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
U									R			

Mini Sudoku

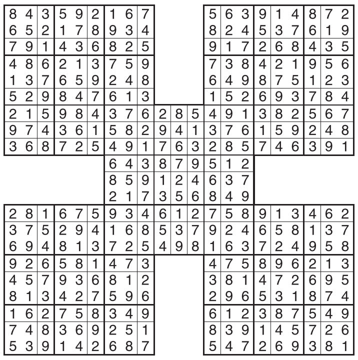
Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

5					2
	2			5	
		5	2		
		4	1		
	1			2	
6					1

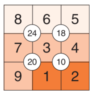
Solutions in tomorrow's Times2

Yesterday's solutions

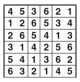
SAMURAI



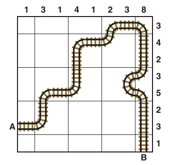
SAKURO



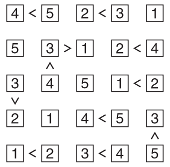
MINI SUDOKU



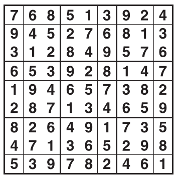
TRAIN TRACKS



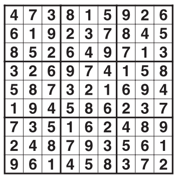
FUTOSHIKI



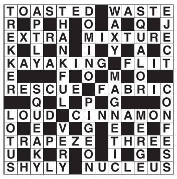
SUDOKU



KILLER



CODEWORD



An uncomfortable, mesmerising watch for us men

Ben Dowell
TV review

Furious

Disney+
★★★★☆

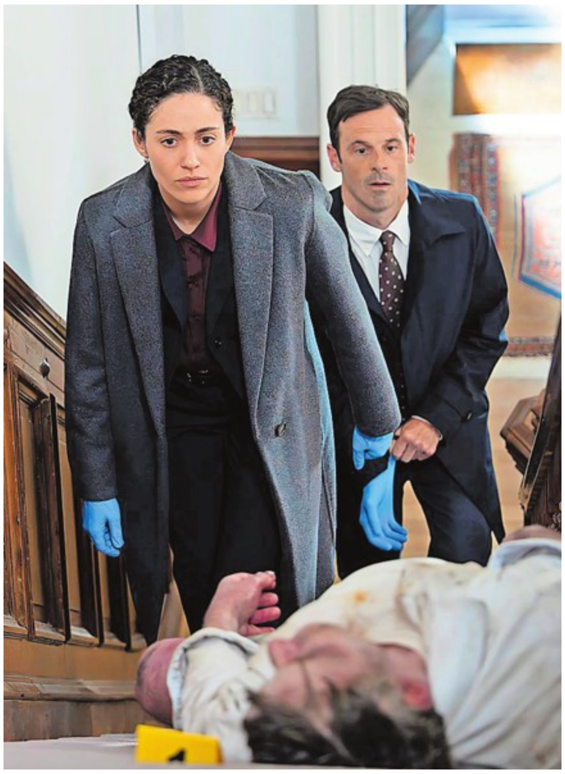
I wouldn't come to Disney+'s dark thriller *Furious* if you're looking for a nice man. I counted two in the eight-part series about a female serial killer enacting vengeance over a child trafficking ring. And it's not a show short of characters.

We are told that its creator Elizabeth Meriwether was inspired by the 1987 thriller *Black Widow* in which Theresa Russell bumped off rich men for personal gain. Here the killings are nastier, but the motive is troublingly righteous. The murder victims are ghastly, entitled creeps, and sympathy is a struggle even when we see the distress on the face of a New York billionaire's son as he is ruthlessly dispatched by Lola Petticrew's Catherine, who tells him she doesn't like the sounds he is making.

It's very 2026 and post-Epstein. And as with *Killing Eve*, the bond between hunter and hunted elevates this above the standard schlocky thriller. Alice Black (Emmy Rossum) has left the NYPD for a lowly posting at the FBI after being hospitalised by her violent cop boyfriend. When we see her working determinedly late at home pursuing the killer, with all those familiar cans of soda and fast food detritus, we know that both women are, in their own ways, victims of powerful, insulated males. And it's hard not to root for justice.

Alice is helped by Dan Kelly (Scoot McNairy), the only NYPD colleague who stood by her (he's decent bloke number one), as well as the fantastically straight-talking jaded alcoholic FBI staffer Nora Washington (Quincy Tyler Bernstine), who spends her days in a locked room trawling through child abuse images.

There is compassion beneath both women's wounds, even if they know what they are up against. Washington invokes Greek myth and the story of Medusa, who was transformed into a monster after being raped by Poseidon. This could be weighed down by many similar moments of earnestness, but it is crafted with enough vim for the rhetorical flourishes to work.


PA
Emmy Rossum as Alice Black and Scoot McNairy as Dan Kelly

In TV's post-Me Too landscape there is no shortage of men across the small screen who are abusers or imbeciles. Here, as in the case of victim number two, a wealthy sleazebag played with the subtlety of a drunk elephant by Rob Delaney, they can be both. After snorting coke and dad-dancing he tells Catherine she is "so real" and gets her to sign an NDA before the sex (and death) begins. He feels ridiculous, almost disposable. But isn't this merely putting the boot on the other foot?

Unafraid to venture to extreme places and armed with an awareness of the absurdity of extreme wickedness, this seems at times like revenge drama in the best traditions of Jacobean masters such as Kyd and Middleton. Even a vaguely comic scene where a key witness, a teenage boy flashed by Catherine while he was smoking pot on his porch, is unsettling. He tells Alice about the difference between a vulva and a vagina, and we realise that he is mansplaining this subject to a woman.

In the context of this show he is a typical, if less obviously dangerous, bloke. So yes. An uncomfortable watch for us men. But such is this drama's relentless, mesmerising power, it is impossible to avert your gaze.

Radio choice

Invisible Hands: The American Century
Radio 4, 9am

Following the terrific *Invisible Hands* series, in which he examined the rise of the free market economy, David Dimbleby, *above*, now turns his attention to how America became a global superpower in the 20th century, by exploring the sometimes shadowy figures who helped made it happen. Part of the *History Podcast* strand, the series will have seven episodes. Dimblebly begins with the US Treasury official Harry Dexter White, a key player in the creation of the IMF and World Bank, and his battle with the British economist John Maynard Keynes.
Clair Woodward

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app

5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Salma El-Wardany and Calum Macdonald **10.00** Lara Spirit **1.00pm** Mark Urban **2.00** Jane Garvey and Fi Glover **4.00** John Pienaar **7.00** Kait Borsay **10.00** Carole Walker **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz

6.30am Sara Cox **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Angela Scanlon **7.00** Jo Whiley **9.00** The Jazz Show **10.00** The Good Groove with Melvin Odoom **12.00** OJ Borg **3.00am** Alternative Sounds of the 90s (r) **4.00** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
BBC Proms: Verdi (*Force of Destiny* Overture); Aldeburgh Festival: "Marriage & Babies". Purcell (*Epithalamium* from *The Fairy Queen*); Strauss (*Zueignung* Op 10 No 1); Libby Larsen (*The Birth Project — No 1 Pregnant*); Victoria Wood (*Litter Bin*); Britten (*Winter Words*, Op 52 No 6 *Proud Songsters "Thrushes, finches and nightingales"*); Pau Casals International Music Festival: Haydn (String Quartet in C, Op 20/2, Hob. III:32). BBC Proms: Mahler (Symphony No 6 in A minor). BBC Proms: Parry (*Songs of Farewell*: *No 6 — Lord, let me know mine end*) and Pau Casals International Music Festival: Beethoven (Piano Trio No 5 in D, Op 70/1 "*Ghost*")
4.00 Composer of the Week: Alice Mary Smith (1839-1884)
Donald Macleod explores the early years of Smith's marriage to a lawyer, Frederick Meadows White
5.00 In Tune
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026
The BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sakari Oramo in Sibelius, Turnage, and with Guy Johnston, Britten. Presented by Hannah French, live from the Royal Albert Hall, London. Mark-Anthony Turnage (*Festen Suite* — BBC co-commission: UK premiere); Britten (Cello Symphony); and Jean Sibelius (Symphony No 2 in D)
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
Soweto Kinch hears from Ghanaian trumpeter Peter Somuah
12.30am Through the Night (r)

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz

5.00am News Summary
5.04 Troubled Town (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Choice Invisible Hands
The story of the man who made America into a superpower (1/6)
9.30 Inside Health
Demystifying health issues (4/6)
10.00 Woman's Hour
Nuala McGovern presents
11.00 Screenshot
Films that confine their action to a single day (4/6) (r)
11.45 Confessions of a Performative Male
By Darren McGarvey (2/5)
12.04pm Call You and Yours
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Dead Rabbit
Powers behind the hare coursing criminal underworld (7/10)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama:
Our Friends in the North
By Adam Usden (10/10) (r)
3.00 Lady on Trial with Lucy Worsley
Second World War conscientious objector Connie Bolam (7/10)
3.30 Heart and Soul (3/10) (r)
4.00 The Writing Life of Sylvia Plath
How Plath's personal relationships informed her work (2/3)
4.30 What's Up Docs?
Why people follow bad advice
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Meet David Sedaris (5/6) (r)
7.00 The Archers
There is an awkward moment for Alice, and Harrison seeks advice
7.15 Front Row
Arts programme
8.00 Floor 15
Following experimental clinical trials at Guy's Hospital
8.40 In Touch
Presented by Peter White
9.00 The Documentary: The Dream Makers
The experimental field of dream engineering
9.30 The Bottom Line
Last in the series (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Wild Dark Shore
By Charlotte McConaghy (7/10)
11.00 Wild Inside
Ben Garrod and Jess French examine the cheetah (1/4) (r)
11.30 A Good Read
Damian Barr and Ben Fergusson discuss favourite books (3) (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Confessions of a Performative Male
By Darren McGarvey (2/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only

8.00am It's a Fair Cop **8.30** Sounds Like London: 100 Years of Black Music in the Capital **8.45** Small Island **9.00** Meet David Sedaris **9.30** The Time of My Life **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** A Good Read **10.30** A Fork in the Road **11.00** Raffles **11.30** Charles Paris: A Deadly Habit **12.00** Yes Minister **12.30pm** The Goon Show **1.00** It's a Fair Cop **1.30** Sounds Like London: 100 Years of Black Music in the Capital **1.45** Small Island **2.00** Hoax! **2.30** The Brothers **3.00** The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency **3.45** The Phoenix and the Carpet **4.00** A Good Read **4.30** A Fork in the Road **5.00** Raffles **5.30** Charles Paris: A Deadly Habit **6.00** Yes Minister **6.30** Goon Show **7.00** It's a Fair Cop **7.30** Sounds Like London: 100 Years of Black Music in the Capital **7.45** Small Island **8.00** Hoax! **8.30** The Brothers **9.00** The No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency **9.45** The Phoenix and the Carpet **10.00** Comedy Club: Meet David Sedaris **10.30** And the Winner Is **10.55** The Comedy Club Interview **11.00** All the World's a Globe **11.15** Foley and McColl: The Interview **11.30** Edge Falls

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909

5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Naga Munchetty **2.00pm** Matt Chorley **4.00** Drive **7.00** Glasgow 2026 **10.00** Sarah Mulkerrins **1.00am** Dotun Adebayo

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz

5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** Breakfast with Jeff Stelling **10.00** Jim White and Simon Jordan **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Jacobs **4.00** talkSPORT Drive **7.00** Kick Off **10.00** The Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

Talk

Digital only

6.00am Jeremy Kyle **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** Ian Collins **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **10.00** Petrie Hosken **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only

5.00am Amy Lamé **7.00** Nick Grimshaw **10.00** Jamz Supernova **1.00pm** Deb Grant **4.00** Huw Stephens **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Riley & Coe **11.00** The First Time With **12.00** 6 Music's Indie Forever **1.00am** You'll Never Be Sixteen Again **2.00** Peel Acres **3.00** 6 Music Live Hour **4.00** The 6 Music Playlist

Virgin Radio

Digital only

6.30am Steve Denyer on The Chris Evans Breakfast Show with Moneybox **10.00** Ana Matronic **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Geoff Lloyd **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** James Merritt

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz

6.30am Breakfast with Dan Walker **9.00** The Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings with Zeb Soanes **9.00** Composer Carousel With Zeb Soanes **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

Gomorrah: The Origins
Sky Atlantic, 9pm/10.05pm

"Wow, che spettacolo," says a grubby child as this late 1970s prequel to *Gomorrah* begins in a sludge brown and orange haze of bar-room disco dancing on the backstreets of Naples. Wow, what a show indeed. The confident and swaggering *Gomorrah* ended in 2021 after five seasons, having brought the story of Italian organised crime to life with an unsparing eye. This new six-part series, directed by Marco D'Amore, will delve into the early career of its protagonist Pietro Savastano (Luca Lubrano) as he is shaped by a city marked by such poverty that, as a news report announces, it suffers from a high infant mortality rate as a result of malnutrition. There are shades of *Romanzo Criminale*, for those who enjoyed the tale of the Roman heroin trade, and of *Narcos*, for those who prefer Colombian. **Helen Stewart**

Gomorrah: The Origins (Sky Atlantic, 9pm/10.05pm)

The Vampire Lestat: Interview with the Vampire
BBC2, 9pm

The rebranded third series of *Interview with the Vampire* is with us, with the licentious 265-year-old French vampire Lestat de Lioncourt (Sam Reid) now exploiting Daniel Molloy's (Eric Bogosian) bestselling *Interview...* book and going public as a hedonistic rock star-vampire. The tonal shift from its doomy gothic predecessor is enough to give you whiplash and, much like Lestat himself, the result is a theatrically manic and erotically charged beast that will shock as many as it seduces. **Andrew Male**

Cold Case Forensics: The Death of God's Banker
ITV1, 9pm

Angela Gallop is not an obvious television star but the renowned forensic scientist exudes an air of calm authority in this fascinating documentary. It reflects on the June 1982 death of the 62-year-old

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Animal Park (r) (AD)
10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back (r)
10.45 Expert Witness (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer
12.15pm Bargain Hunt (r) (AD)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing. Transforming a coffee table and a collection of old frames
2.45 Escape to the Country. A London buyer would like a North Yorkshire cottage (r)
3.45 The Bidding Room. Items include a music stool, a 19th-century home electric shock kit, tie presses and a silver tea set (r)
4.30 The Travelling Auctioneers. Collectibles include a rare watch, a collection of railwayana and a spinning wheel (r) (AD)
5.15 Pointless. Quiz hosted by Alexander Armstrong and Gyles Brandreth (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 **The One Show** Presented by Alex Jones and Vernon Kay

7.30 **EastEnders** Sheila is left shaken after a tense visit with Gray. Elsewhere, tensions continue to rise between George and Nicola (AD)

8.00 **The Great British Sewing Bee** The amateur sewers tackle reduce, reuse, recycle week, turning old T-shirts into underwear, using waste items to decorate their transformations and making outfits with an eco-message (3/10) (AD)

9.00 **Murder 24/7** How five men were convicted of the murder of 23-year-old Aurman Singh, a DPD driver who was ambushed and killed in Shrewsbury. Detectives used CCTV, phone records and ANPR data to trace the vehicle in which the men fled the scene (3/8) (AD)

10.00 **BBC News at Ten**

10.30 **BBC Regional News and Weather**
10.40 **FILM: Blinded by the Light (12, 2019)** Javed Khan is a British-Pakistani college student living in 1980s Bedfordshire under a domineering father. Facing parental pressure and everyday racism, he unexpectedly finds his frustrations and ambitions expressed in Bruce Springsteen songs. Inspired by the rock star and a teacher who encourages his own writing, he sets out to fulfill his dreams. Coming-of-age drama starring Viveik Kalra, Kulvinder Ghir and Meera Ganatra

12.35am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2

6.30am Bargain Hunt (r)
7.15 Animal Park (r) (AD)
8.00 Sign Zone: The Great British Sewing Bee. Prints and colours theme (r) (AD, SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00pm Richard Osman's House of Games. With Yasmine Akram and Cariad Lloyd (r)
1.30 The Finish Line. Quiz hosted by Roman Kemp and Sarah Greene (r)
2.15 Lightning. Quiz hosted by Zoe Lyons (r)
2.45 The Hairy Bikers' Bakeation. Recipes from the Netherlands and Belgium (r) (AD)
3.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown. A pair launch their new chilli ice-cream at Abergavenny Food Festival (r)
4.15 Earth from Space. Brazilian lagoons and the Amazon river (r) (AD)
5.15 Flog It! From Lulworth Castle, Dorset (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. With Karen Hauer, Storm Huntley, Joe Marler and Tom Read Wilson (r)
6.30 Just One Thing. Zoe Ball looks at how sunlight can improve heart health (r) (AD)

7.00 **Rick Stein's Food Stories** Rick meets a foraging chef and a famous sheep farmer in the Lake District, then heads to Yorkshire to see the UK's biggest tofu factory (2/6) (r) (AD)

8.00 **Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby** Rob Rinder and Monica Galetti work at a luxury hotel in Ibiza, where cutting edge "biohacking" therapies are offered alongside cacao ceremonies (3/8) (r) (AD)

9.00 **The Vampire Lestat: Interview with the Vampire** New series. Gothic horror starring Jacob Anderson. Lestat recounts what led to a brutal hotel confrontation. *See picks of the day* (1/7) (AD)
9.45 **Live at the Apollo** Jamali Maddix comperes the comedy show at London's Hammersmith Apollo, warming up the audience before introducing routines by Fern Brady and Sindhu Vee (6/7) (r)

10.30 **Newsnight** Headline analysis presented by Victoria Derbyshire

11.05 **FILM: The New Boy (12, 2023)** Australian drama following an Aboriginal orphan boy as he arrives at a remote monastery. Starring Cate Blanchett, Aswan Reid, Deborah Mailman and Wayne Blair

12.35am Sign Zone: Natalie Cassidy — Caring Together Natalie learns about dementia care, experiencing what it is like to have the disease and putting her learning into practice on a special placement (r) (AD, SL) **1.05** Bergerac (r) (AD, SL) **1.55-2.25** Do You Know Your Place? (r) (SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning. A mix of celebrity chat, lifestyle features, advice and competitions
1.00pm ITV News; Weather
1.30 Live ITV Racing: Glorious Goodwood. Ed Chamberlin and Francesca Cumani present coverage of day one of the meeting, including feature race the Goodwood Cup, and four more supporting races. With analysis from Jason Weaver and Hayley Turner, reports by Rishi Persad, Sally Ann Grassick, and Luke Harvey, and commentary by Richard Hoiles
4.30 Tipping Point: Best Ever Finals. Dramatic endgames from the game show hosted by Ben Shephard, as players take on the machine for its £10,000 jackpot (r)
5.00 The Chase. Contestants from Blackburn, Norwich, Canterbury and Sale hope they can win thousands of pounds as a team. Bradley Walsh asks the questions (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 **Inside the Langham: Britain's First Grand Hotel** A wedding planner pulls out all the stops for a breathtaking, ultra-exclusive ceremony (2/6) (AD)

8.00 **Emmerdale** Vinny's jealousy could be causing a problem. Graham goes snooping around the depot (AD)

8.30 **Coronation Street** David and Shona confront Jodie over the contents of her trinket box (AD)

9.00 **Cold Case Forensics: The Death of God's Banker** New series. A look at the death of Italian banker Roberto Calvi, whose body was found hanging under Blackfriars Bridge with the investigation leading to a murky world of finances. *See picks of the day* (1/3) (AD)

10.00 **ITV News at Ten; Weather;** followed by Regional News

10.45 **FILM: Bad Boys (15, 1995)** Two detectives are forced to swap identities as they hunt for a heroin consignment stolen by a drug kingpin. Michael Bay's action thriller starring Will Smith, Martin Lawrence, Tea Leoni, Tcheky Karyo and Theresa Randle (AD)

1.00am Shop on TV 3.00 The Staircase. Michael's children grapple with shocking new information about their father (r) (AD, SL) **4.05** Unwind with ITV **5.10-6.00** Dickinson's Real Deal. The team is at Newcastle racecourse, where items include a diamond and gold necklace (r) (AD, SL)

Channel 4

6.25am Cheers (r)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It. Turning a pile of old slate into an unusual lamp (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. Two strangers are given the opportunity to buy a property in north Wales (r)
2.10 Countdown. With Scarlett Moffatt
3.00 A Place in the Sun. Sara Damergi helps best friends find a holiday home in Roquetas de Mar on Spain's south east coast (r)
4.00 Narrow Escapes. A family heads back to Skipton as their narrowboat holiday comes to an end and a boat instructor helps a solo cruiser in Worcestershire (r) (AD)
5.00 Château DIY. Owners prepare to host their first floral retreat (r) (AD)
6.00 American Pickers. Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz put thousands on the line to strike a deal with a tough negotiator (r) (AD)

7.00 **Channel 4 News**

8.00 **Hotel Chocolat Unwrapped** New series. Behind the scenes at the chocolatier as the company moves into the bakery business, dream up new products, tour UK summer festivals and plan a new store in the US. *See picks of the day* (AD)

9.00 **The Undeclared War** Barbara crosses paths with her ex-boyfriend Nicky Chan — first in 2014 in Hong Kong on a fated MI6 mission, and then again in 2022, when he reappears in London. Thriller starring Simon Pegg and Siân Brooke (3/6) (AD)

10.00 **Gogglebox** The armchair critics share their opinions on *The Celebrity Traitors*, *Trigger Point*, *Michael McIntyre's The Wheel*, *The Great British Bake Off*, *Love Is Blind* and *DIY SOS* (r) (AD)

11.05 **First Dates** Visitors include a woman who has never had a boyfriend who connects with her date over a shared love of fashion, and two strangers who bond over chocolate (r) (AD)

12.05am Naked Attraction (r) (AD) **1.05** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r) **1.55** The Piano (r) (AD, SL) **2.50 FILM: American Refugee (15, 2021)** Horror starring Erika Alexander **4.25** Couples Come Dine with Me (r) **5.15** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It: Brilliant Builds (r) **5.45-6.25** Countdown (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis
12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright
2.20 FILM: Mystery of the Dead Nanny (12, TVM, 2022) After declining the advances of an influential father, an au pair lives in fear for her safety. Thriller with Nicolette Langley
4.00 Castle. Beckett and Castle go undercover as newlyweds at an Old West-style resort in Arizona to investigate a murder after a sheriff refuses to help. Nathan Fillion and Stana Katic star (r)
4.55 Love Nature. Examining Feed the Birds, a Shropshire charity combating loneliness through a shared love of wildlife (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Malta: The Jewel of the Med. A tour of the popular Mediterranean island, beginning with a look round a cathedral in the capital, Valletta, gleaming with 24-carat gold (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 **The Yorkshire Vet: At Home with the Greens** Documentary following the lives of two of Britain's oldest working farmers who are looking for new ways to keep their farm afloat, including alpaca walks (1/4) (r)

7.55 **5 News Update**

8.00 **Inside Longleat** In the historic Secret Garden, the team manoeuvres a bronze sculpture by global rock star Ronnie Wood into prime position. There is a very special party for senior keeper Ian Turner to celebrate 50 years of his work at Longleat

9.00 **The Crow Girl** As Jeanette and Sophia dig deeper into Victoria's past, their relationship grows closer, Amar shares important information with Mike, and Jeanette learns a secret that changes everything. Also, Victoria and Madeleine hatch a plan. Starring Eve Myles (5/6) (AD)

10.00 **Commonwealth Games 2026** Highlights from the fifth day in Glasgow, which included the men's and women's 100m finals at Scotstoun Stadium and the penultimate day of swimming and para swimming

11.05 **Accused: Guilty or Innocent?** A suspect's journey through the criminal justice system. When a ten-year old cold murder case heats back up, the police finally have a suspect — who would have been 13 at the time (4/7) (r)

12.05am Accused: Guilty or Innocent? (r) **12.55** Entertainment News on 5 **1.00** Cruise TV (r) **2.00** Building the Impossible (r) **2.50** Malta: The Jewel of the Med (r) **3.45** Friends (r) (AD) **4.35** The Highland Vet (r) (SL) **5.25** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35** Milo (r) (SL) **5.45-6.00** The Adventures of Paddington (r)

Italian banker Roberto Calvi, who was found hanging from scaffolding beneath Blackfriars Bridge in London. His death was initially deemed a suicide, which troubled the Calvi family, who brought Gallop (a former Home Office senior forensic scientist) in to examine a case that occurred at a time when Italian organised crime, Vatican finance and political corruption shared the same bloodstream. She reconstructs the experiments that brought her investigation to a conclusion. **HS**

Hotel Chocolat Unwrapped
Channel 4, 8pm

Chocoholics assemble: it is possible to get a cacao contact high from this brand profile, back for a second series. The high point of this kind of show is the product development, and so it proves with this look at the high-end chocolate brand's "inventing rooms" and its venture into the world of baked goods. There is also a more hard-nosed look at the company's expansion into America. **Victoria Segal**

STREAMING CHOICE

Marc Maron: From Bleak to Dark
HBO Max

Part stand-up comedy special, part on-stage therapy session, this comedy set finds the ex-podcast host and indie actor at a dark place in his life, dealing with the loss of his partner, the director Lynn Shelton, and navigating his father's dementia. The surprise is in how Maron uses his grief as a store of energy, resulting in 60 minutes of structured dark comedy that touches on everything from love, ageing and death to cats, children and antisemitism. There is also warmth here. **AM**

FILM CHOICE

The Madness of King George (PG, 1994)
Film4, 6.50pm

Nicholas Hytner directed this adaptation of Alan Bennett's successful tragicomic stage play. The result is a highly entertaining costume drama about an embattled king who comes close to losing his crown and his marbles. What elevates the film is an astonishing performance from Nigel Hawthorne, who was nominated for an Oscar, reprising the role of King George III that he played in the stage version. The first-rate supporting cast includes Helen Mirren as Queen Charlotte and Ian Holm as the unconventional Dr Francis Willis. (110min) **Wendy Ide**

BBC4
7.00pm Great British Railway Journeys. Visiting Dundee (AD) **7.30** Walking with Monica Galetti **8.00** Keeping Up Appearances **8.30** One Foot in the Grave **9.00** She-Wolves: England's Early Queens. The lives of Isabella of France and Margaret of Anjou (2/3) **10.00** Castles: Britain's Fortified History. Charting how Edward I turned the castle into an instrument of colonisation (AD) **11.00** Corridors of Power: Should America Police the World? A look at ethnic cleansing (5/8) (AD) **12.00** Corridors of Power: Should America Police the World? (AD) **1.00am** She-Wolves: England's Early Queens. Documentary **2.00** Castles: Britain's Fortified History (AD) **3.00** Great British Railway Journeys (AD, SL) **3.30am-4.00** Walking with Monica Galetti (SL)

Sky Arts
6.00am Classic FM's Rising Stars 2023 **7.00** Classic FM's Rising Stars 2021 **8.00** The Joy of Painting (AD) **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering (AD) **12.00** The Movies **1.00pm** Tales of Unexpected (AD) **2.00** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour (b/w) **3.00** The Seventies (AD) **4.00** Discovering (AD) **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2021 (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **7.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **8.00** The World in a Painting: Caravaggio's Comb **9.15** Beyond the Brush (AD) **10.15** Wonderland: Gothic (AD) **11.15** Douglas Adams: The Man Who Imagined Our Future (AD) **12.45am** Miyazaki: Spirit of Nature (AD) **2.20 FILM: Cover Your Ears (15, 2023)** **4.10** The Art of the Garden **5.05am-6.00** The Movies

More4
8.55am Heir Hunters **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me (AD) **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.50** George Clarke's Old House, New Home (AD) **6.55** Location, Location, Location **7.55** Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud follows a couple's project to transform a 1960s forester's lodge into a unique Japanese home, complete with a tatami room and sliding paper walls (6/12) (AD) **9.00** Oti and Richard's South African Odyssey. Oti and Richard explore the province of KwaZulu-Natal (AD) **10.00** 24 Hours in A&E. A 12-year-old girl is treated after falling down a flight of stairs (AD) **11.05** 24 Hours in A&E. A girl is treated after being hit by a car and knocked under a bus (AD) **12.10am** 999: On the Front Line **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25am-4.00** A Place in the Sun

Live sport today

Pakistan captain Babar Azam

Live Tennis
Sky Sports Tennis, 6am-8am
Day one of the Los Cabos Open, the ATP 250 event, at Cabo Sports Complex, Mexico

Live Test Cricket:
West Indies v Pakistan
TNT Sports 1, 2.30pm-11
Coverage of the fourth day of the first Test in the two-match series in Trinidad and Tobago

Live The Hundred: Sunrisers Leeds Women v Manchester Super Giants Women
Sky Sports Cricket, 2.45pm-6, Sky Sports Main Event, 3pm-6
(Start-time **3.00**). Coverage of the match in Headingley, Leeds

Live Tennis
Sky Sports +, 4pm-4am, Sky Sports Tennis, 4pm-2am
Coverage of day two of the Washington DC Open

Live The Hundred: Sunrisers Leeds Men v Manchester Super Giants Men
Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Cricket, 6pm-9.30
(Start-time **6.30**). Coverage of the match in Headingley, Leeds

Talking Pictures
7.30am Happy In The Morning: Henry Hall Ascot Heaters **7.45 FILM: Meet Mr Callaghan (U, 1954)** (b/w) **9.30 FILM: The Spider and the Fly (U, 1949)** (b/w) **11.30** Star Performance: Young Girl in an Apple Tree (b/w) **12.00** Railway Murders **1.00pm** The Adventures of William Tell (b/w) **1.30 FILM: Home and Away (U, 1956)** (b/w) **3.10** Jodie Foster: Hollywood Under the Skin **4.15 FILM: Doctor in Clover (PG, 1966)** **6.15** Look at Life **6.25** Whiplash (b/w) **6.55** The Man from UNCLE **7.55** Buccaneer **9.00 FILM: Night of the Eagle (15, 1961)** Thriller with Janet Blair (b/w) **10.45** Fortean TV **11.20 FILM: The One That Got Away (U, 1957)** (b/w) **1.35am FILM: Bluebeard (18, 1972)** **3.55-4.00** Daily Sketch Jigsaw Puzzle

Film4
11.00am The Undefeated (PG, 1969) Western starring John Wayne **1.20pm Anne of the Thousand Days (PG, 1969)** Historical drama starring Richard Burton **4.10 Twelve O'Clock High (U, 1949)** Second World War drama starring Gregory Peck (b/w) **6.50 The Madness of King George (PG, 1994)** Period drama starring Nigel Hawthorne, Helen Mirren and Rupert Everett. *See film choice* (AD) **9.00 American Star (15, 2024)** An assassin completing his final assignment is drawn to a ghostly shipwreck. Thriller starring Ian McShane and Nora Arnezeder **11.10 Sexy Beast (18, 2000)** A retired safe-breaker living in Spain receives an unwelcome visit from his former boss. Crime thriller with Ray Winstone and Ben Kingsley (AD) **12.55am-3.15 Black Sea (15, 2014)** Thriller starring Jude Law

BBC3
7.00pm The Catch Up **7.05** Deadly 60. Useful weapons **7.35** Deadly 60. Deadly creatures **8.00** Top Gear. With Tinie Tempah **9.00** Shabaz Asks: Are Billionaires Bad? The broadcaster puts his feelings about the super-rich to the test, questioning their positive and negative influence on society before meeting a billionaire face to face **9.50** Good Bad Billionaire. New series. How the world's richest people made their fortune **10.35** Good Bad Billionaire. How Cristiano Ronaldo made his fortune **11.20** Good Bad Billionaire. How MrBeast made his fortune **12.10am** The Tech Billionaire Takeover (AD) **1.10** OnlyFans: Inside the Machine (AD) **2.10** Dating Apps: The Inside Story (AD) **3.10am-4.00** Shabaz Asks: Are Billionaires Bad? (SL)

ITV2
6.30am Deal or No Deal (AD) **7.30** Dress to Impress (AD, SL) **8.25** Olivia and Alex: Parenthood (AD) **9.30** The Only Way Is Essex **10.30** The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City **11.20** The Real Housewives of Orange County **12.15pm** Dinner Date (AD) **1.15** Supermarket Sweep **2.15** The Floor USA (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City **5.00** The Real Housewives of Orange County **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** The Floor USA (AD) **8.00** The 1% Club (AD) **9.00** The Princess Diaries. New series. Princess Andre returns **10.00** Love Island: The Debrief **10.30** Family Guy (AD) **11.30** American Dad! (AD) **12.35am** Bob's Burgers (AD) **1.30-1.55am** Plebs (AD, SL)

ITV3
6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.05** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** A Touch of Frost (AD) **11.20** Heartbeat (AD) **1.30pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.30** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **4.40** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat (AD) **6.55** Heartbeat (AD) **8.00** Vera. When a man's body is dredged up from a slurry pit on a remote farm, Vera must connect the dots between the victim and a wounded immigrant (3/4) (AD) **10.00** Grantchester. Sidney receives anonymous phone calls (1/6) (AD) **11.00** Grantchester. A village cricket match results in murder (2/6) (AD) **11.50** Trial & Retribution. A honeymooner vanishes (1/2) **1.25am-2.25** Wycliffe. Tragedy hits a wedding party (1/9)

ITV4
6.00am Magnum, PI **8.05** Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) **9.10** Boon **10.15** The Champions **11.20** Robin of Sherwood **12.30pm** Magnum, PI **2.35** Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) **3.45** Boon **4.50** The Champions **5.55** Minder (AD) **7.00** Formula E Highlights. Action from the Tokyo ePrix **8.00** King of the Roads. Action from the Skerries 100 in Ireland **9.00** Ice Road Truckers. Hugh and Rick transport prefabricated sections of a new airport building **10.00** All Elite Wrestling: Collision. Hard-hitting action, featuring stars including FTR, Thunder Rosa, Jon Moxley and Jay White **12.00** Dark Side of the Ring. The Fabulous Moolah **12.55am** Minder (AD, SL) **1.50-2.40** BattleBots **3.30am-4.00** Auto Mundial

U&Drama
6.00am Teleshopping **7.20** The Bill **8.15** Doctors **9.25** Classic Holby City **10.45** Casualty (AD) **11.40** The Bill **12.50pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Neighbours **3.00** Pie in the Sky **4.05** Lovejoy **5.20** Waiting for God **6.00** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** 'Allo 'Allo! German generals plan to meet at the cafe in disguise **8.35** 'Allo 'Allo! Rene sets out to retrieve the paintings **9.10** 'Allo 'Allo! The Colonel, Gruber, Bertorelli and Leclerc are held ransom by Denise **9.40** New Tricks. Pullman agrees to reinvestigate the case of a teenager who was abducted (7/7) (AD) **11.00** Silent Witness. A schoolteacher is missing (AD) **1.30am** Lovejoy **2.25** Waiting for God **2.55** Darby and Joan (SL) **4.00am-6.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
10.40pm House of the Year (r) 11.10 FILM: Blinded by the Light (2019) 1.00am-6.00 BBC News

BBC1 Scotland
7.00pm-7.30 River City (r) 12.30am Scotcast (r) 1.00 Weather 1.05am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2 N Ireland
9.45pm If Walls Could Talk (r) 10.00-10.30pm Paula McIntyre's Hamely Kitchen USA (r)

STV
1.30pm-4.30 Live STV Racing: Glorious Goodwood 1.00am-3.00 Shop on TV 4.05-6.00 Night Vision

BBC Scotland
7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven 7.30 My Kind of Town (r) 8.00 This Farming Life (r) 9.00 The Beauty Queen and the Catfish (r) 11.15 Scotcast 11.45pm-12.00 Growing Up Scottish (r)

S4C
6.00am Cyw 12.00 News; Weather 12.05pm Codi Pac (r) 12.30 Heno (r) 1.00 Eigra (r) 1.30 Arfordir Cymru: Sir Benfro (r) 2.00 News; Weather 2.05 Prynhawn Da 3.00 News; Weather 3.05 Gwesty Aduniad (r) 4.00 Awr Fawr: Blociau Lliw (r) 4.05 Twm Twrch (r) 4.15 Fferm Fach (r) 4.30 Blero yn Mynd i Ocido (r) 4.45 Byd Tad-Cu (r) 5.00 Stwnsh: Dreigiau — Marchogion Berc (r) 5.25 Larfa (r) 5.30 Y Doniolis (r) 5.35 Dyffryn Mwmin (r) 6.00 Y Ci Perffaith (r) 6.30 Pobol y Cwm 6.57 News 7.00 Heno 7.30 News; Weather 8.00 Gemau'r Gymanwlad 2026. The fifth night in Glasgow 10.30-11.35pm Y Fets (r)

PBS America
8.00am America the Bountiful **8.35** Treasures Decoded **9.35** Pirates: Behind the Legends **10.35** Maps of Power **11.50** Auschwitz: The Inside Man **1.00pm** America the Bountiful **1.35** Treasures Decoded **2.35** Pirates: Behind the Legends **3.35** Maps of Power **4.50** Auschwitz: The Inside Man **6.00** America the Bountiful **6.35** Treasures Decoded. The Roman practice of crucifixion **7.35** Pirates: Behind the Legends. The story of Grace O'Malley, the Pirate Queen of Ireland **8.35** Maps of Power. Exploring how geography has shaped the decisions of governments (1/3) **9.50** Auschwitz: The Inside Man. The untold story of Witold Pilecki **11.00** Pirates: Behind the Legends **12.00** Maps of Power **1.15am-2.00** America the Bountiful

Sky Atlantic
6.00am Fish Town (r) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.10** The White Lotus (r) (AD) **12.25pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.15** Billions (r) (AD) **4.25** The White Lotus (r) (AD) **6.45** The Gilded Age. Gladys and the duke's wedding is imminent (r) (AD) **7.55** The Gilded Age. Gladys has trouble adjusting to her new circumstances (5/8) (r) (AD) **9.00** Gomorrah: The Origins. Crime drama prequel starring Luca Lubrano. *See picks of the day* (r) **10.05** Gomorrah: The Origins. Angelo receives an invitation that could improve his situation. *See picks of the day* (r) **11.05** Prisoner. A wider threat begins to emerge (r) (AD) **12.05am** The White Lotus (r) (AD) **2.35** Billions (r) (AD) **3.40** Urban Secrets (r) **4.35** Sort Of (r) (AD) **5.05am-6.00** Urban Secrets (r)

Sky Docs
6.00am The Nineties (r) **7.00** Discovering: Whoopi Goldberg (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **9.00** Ren Faire (r) (AD) **10.00** The Man Who Played with Fire (r) **11.00** Murder in Boston: Roots, Rampage and Reckoning (r) **12.00 FILM: Val (12, 2021)** Documentary focusing on the daily life of actor Val Kilmer (AD) **2.00pm** Williams & Mansell: Red 5 (r) (AD) **3.50** My Icon: Natasha Jonas (r) (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **5.00** Discovering: Whoopi Goldberg (r) (AD) **6.00** I Am Paul Walker (r) **7.50** My Icon: Casey Stoney (r) (AD) **8.00** Murder at the Cottage (r) (AD) **9.00** Murder at the Cottage (r) (AD) **10.00** I Am Patrick Swayze (r) (AD) **11.50** UFO. Double bill (r) (AD) **3.50am** Adam Hills: Foot Fault (r) (AD) **5.00am-6.00** Discovering: Whoopi Goldberg (r) (AD)

U&Yesterday
6.10am Abandoned Engineering (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** World War Two from Above **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **4.00** Secret Nazi Bases **5.00** World War Two from Above **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** Asia. How animals survive when northern Asia is transformed by snow and ice (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. American beach bike (AD) **9.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **10.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A VW Beetle (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A Mazda MX-5 (AD) **12.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **2.00** Great British Railway Journeys **3.00am-6.10** Teleshopping

MindGames

Tetonor Moderate No 695

95	168	31	300
228	37	270	35
29	276	33	210
234	79	154	116

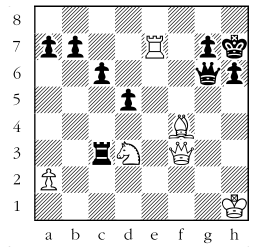
2	2	3		8			15		18		21		77	92	

When complete, the strip below the grid can be split into eight pairs of numbers. Adding the numbers in a pair gives one of the 16 numbers in the grid. Multiplying them gives a different number in the grid. For example, a 4 and 6 in the strip could be paired to make 10 (4+6) and 24 (4x6) in the grid. Enter each sum below the corresponding number in the grid. The blanks in the strip must be deduced, bearing in mind the numbers are listed in ascending order.

The next Tetonor puzzle will appear on Thursday

For more puzzles, including Mini Sudoku, extra Codeword, Train Tracks and Futoshiki go to page 10

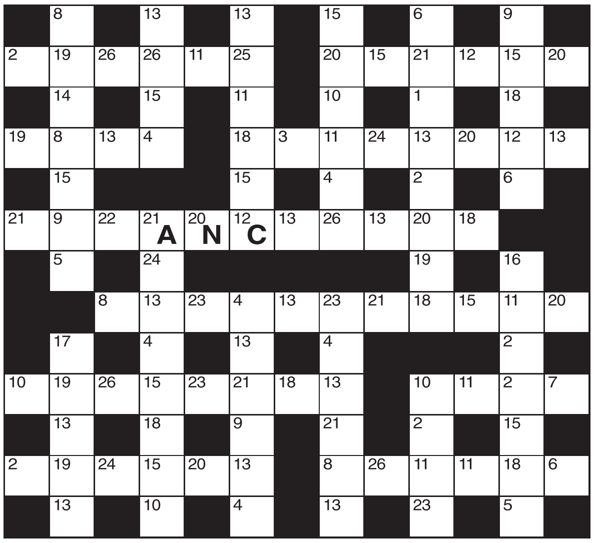
Winning Move



White to play.
This position is from Kuandykuly-Liu, Montesilvano 2026.

White is two pieces ahead here. This is a huge material advantage that would normally be expected to result in an easy win. However, Black does have five(!) pawns in compensation, the white king is exposed and there is a nasty pin against the d3-knight. 1 Re3 isn't bad but what is more to the point?

Codeword No 5904



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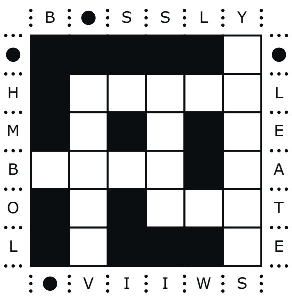
~~A~~ B ~~C~~ D E F G H I J K L M ~~N~~ O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

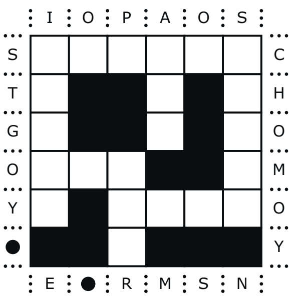
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 C	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 N	21 A	22	23	24	25	26

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

Cluelines Stuck on Codeword? To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

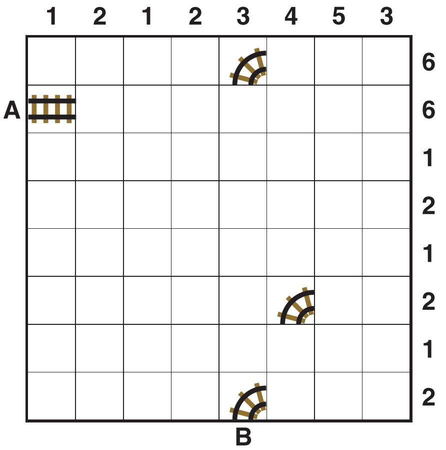
Lexica Easy No 9019 Hard No 9020





Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2929



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2631

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Volcano erupting engulfs vessel (5)

_ _ _ _ _

2 Large gun member of clergy picked up (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 King entering coastal area is violation (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Heathen in playing field (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Detective with tough neighbourhood (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	B	C	C	C	C
D	D	E	E	E	F	H	I
I	I	I	L	N	N	N	N
N	O	O	R	R	S	T	T

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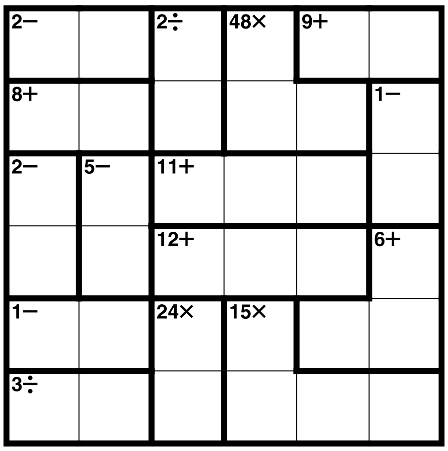
Try Wordhunt and Picle, our new online Quick Play puzzles at thetimes.com/puzzles and on the Live app

KenKen Medium No 6896



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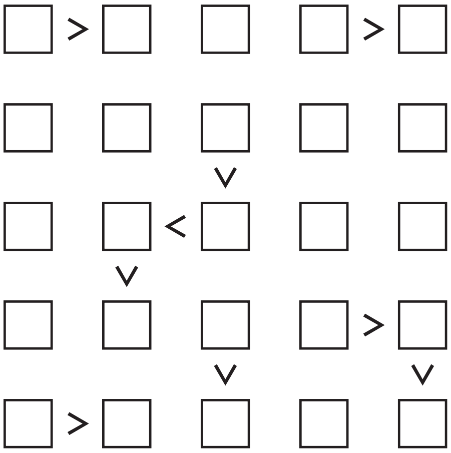
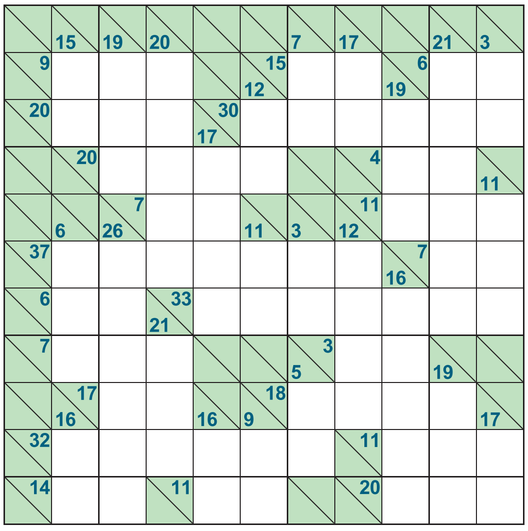
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5444



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4403



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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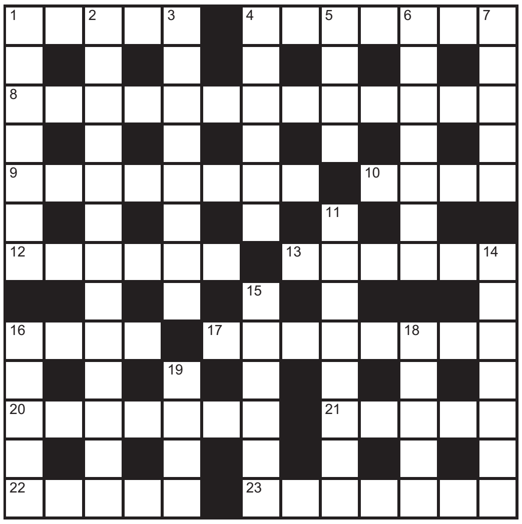
MindGames

times2 Crossword No 10,220



Across

1 Billiard table fabric (5)
4 Points of origin (7)
8 Absence (3-10)
9 Through the sky (8)
10 Badger's home (4)
12 Draw casually (6)
13 Period of intense personal or political turbulence (6)
16 High-flying songbird (4)
17 Women's nightwear (8)
20 Persistently trouble (7)
21 Pollex of the human hand (5)
22 Light amplification device (5)
23 Great distress (7)

Down

1 Refuse sacks (3,4)
2 Archipelago including Skye and Mull (5,8)
3 Gateway (8)
4 Appropriate, proper (6)
5 Pakistani language (4)
6 Fireplace remnants (7)
7 Skin moisture (5)
11 Powerful racing car (8)
14 Sweet fizzy powder (7)
15 Young of a sow and boar (6)
16 Identifying sticker (5)
18 Bring out of sleep (5)
19 More than (4)

Solution to Crossword 10,219

U	P	T	O	T	H	E	M	I	N	U	T	E
N	■	A	■	A	■	G	■	N	■	N	■	D
W	I	N	D	B	A	G	■	F	A	D	E	D
I	■	T	■	■	■	C	■	U	■	U	■	Y
E	A	R	■	S	Q	U	I	R	R	E	L	■
L	■	U	■	T	■	P	■	I	■	■	■	G
D	E	M	E	A	N	■	R	A	F	F	I	A
Y	■	■	■	T	■	E	■	T	■	E	■	R
■	J	A	N	E	E	Y	R	E	■	L	O	G
S	■	R	■	M	■	E	■	■	■	L	■	O
H	O	R	D	E	■	L	U	C	K	I	L	Y
E	■	O	■	N	■	E	■	U	■	N	■	L
D	O	W	N	T	O	T	H	E	W	I	R	E

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Dealer: West, Vulnerability: Neither

Teams

♠A103
♥K65
♦Q95
♣Q1042

♠KQJ9875
♥982
♦10
♣83

N
W E
S

♠6
♥AJ1074
♦K6
♣KJ976

♠42
♥Q3
♦AJ87432
♣A5

Table One

S	W(Smith)	N	E(Senior)
	3♠ (1)	end	

(1) You could hardly get a more textbook 3♠ opener – weak with seven good spades.

Table Two

S(Brown)	W	N(Erichsen)	E
	3♠	Pass	Pass
3NT(1)	Pass	Pass	Dbl(2)
4♦(3)	Pass	Pass(4)	Pass

(1) I like it! As the late Hugh Kelsey famously said, "When you've shown a stopper in the bidding, you don't need one in the play" (the defence may misfire, thinking you're covered in spades).
(2) Bold but many (like me) have the agreement that double asks partner to lead the other major (ie hearts).
(3) Brown can't know that her partner has a hand to make 3NT.
(4) Tempting to bid on (4NT or 5♦) but thinks East has eg ♥AQJxx over her ♥Kxx.

The main aim in the biennial European Bridge National Teams Championships is to finish in the top eight in your series, qualifying for the World Bridge Team Championships the following year.

In the 57th such event, recently concluded in Riga, Latvia, the England Open Team finished 6th and the Mixed Team finished 5th — job done nicely. The Senior Team lost three of their last four matches and sadly dropped to 9th.

The England Women qualified in the best way possible — winning the gold medal. Many congratulations to their cross-generational team with an age range of almost 60 years. All three pairs finished near the top of the individual Butler scoring: Charlotte Bedford-Lucy Norman (both in their teens) +.87 (imps per board), Nicola Smith-Nevena Senior +.67, Helen Erichsen-Fiona Brown +.49.

On today's deal from England v Poland, what would you do as South after the bidding goes 3♠ - Pass - Pass to you?

Some bid 4♦ — but is that an action that rates to gain much? Others, such as the Polish South at Table One, chose to go quietly — understandable, you could be walking into a hornet's nest. And so Nicola Smith, West, who won the European Championships for an incredible ninth time (the first was in 1975), got to declare 3♠.

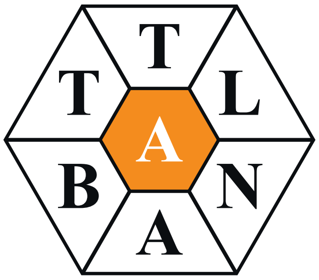
North led ♣2 to ♣J and ♣A. There is only one switch that defeats 3♠ — and that's ♥Q (leading to a third-round ruff). When South switched to ♠2, declarer was soon drawing trumps, finessing in hearts and chalking up +140.

Fiona Brown made her 4♦ for a seven-IMP pick-up. Here's the line to make the overtrick. Win West's ♠K lead with ♠A and lead ♦Q, covered by ♦K, ♦A (and ♦10). Next, cross to ♦9 and lead ♥5 to ♥Q. Now ♣A and ♣5 to ♣10 (and ♣J) endplays East. andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Brain Trainer

EASY	57	x 2	− 18	÷ 4	− 7	x 5	+ 54	− 19	÷ 12	TIMES ITSELF	ANSWER
MEDIUM	57	x 3	+ 211	½ OF IT	− 52	DOUBLE IT	+ 122	÷ 20	+3/10 OF IT	÷ 13	ANSWER
HARDER	578	x 3	1/6 OF IT	− 178	x 5	+ 225	÷ 4	− 96	÷ 9	SQUARE IT	ANSWER

Polygon

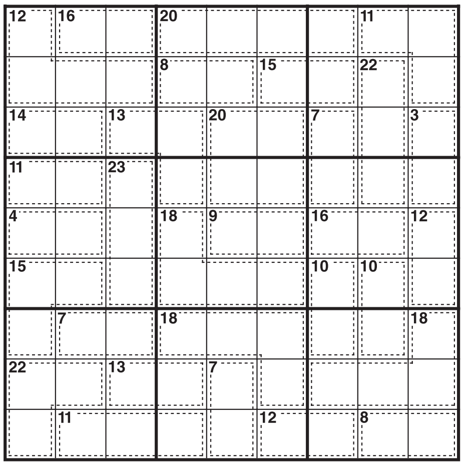


From these letters, make words of **three** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary,* excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 9 words, average; 13, good; 17, very good; 22, excellent

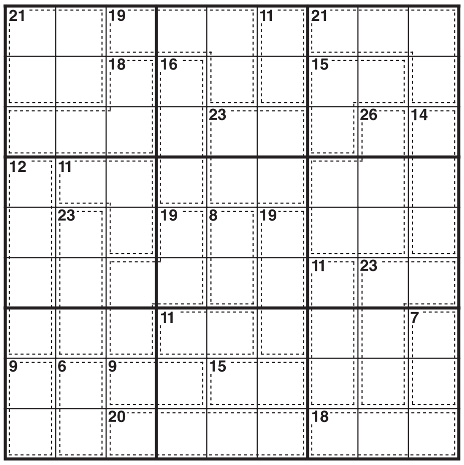
Yesterday's answers

chore, cor, core, corse, croze, her, hero, hers, hoer, horse, hoser, ocher, ochre, orc, ore, rec, rho, roc, roe, rose, **scherzo**, score, shore, sore, zero

Killer Moderate No 10,846



Killer Tough No 10,847



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5787

	4					4
2			2	3		
	3					
	2	4		3	10	
	4					
	2		6			

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Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 4406

	−		+		= 11
+	🟧	×	🟧	+	
	+	8	+		= 19
÷	🟧	×	🟧	−	
	×		×	4	= 72
= 3		= 48		= 10	

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Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Solutions

Quick Cryptic 3364

D	E	S	I	G	N	E	D	■	S	C	A	R
A	■	A	■	R	■	N	■	■	■	L	■	E
R	U	M	B	A	■	T	I	C	K	O	F	F
K	■	O	■	N	■	R	■	L	■	T	■	I
■	C	A	R	D	G	A	M	E	■	H	E	N
I	■	■	■	F	■	P	■	V	■	E	■	E
N	A	P	K	I	N	■	G	E	Y	S	E	R
F	■	O	■	N	■	F	■	R	■	■	■	Y
O	W	L	■	A	L	L	O	C	A	T	E	■
R	■	E	■	L	■	E	■	L	■	R	■	B
M	A	C	H	E	T	E	■	O	R	A	T	E
E	■	A	■	■	■	C	■	G	■	C	■	A
R	I	T	E	■	M	E	N	S	W	E	A	R

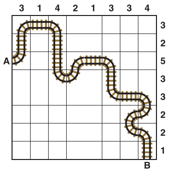
Codeword 5903

G	O	S	S	I	P	■	S	Q	U	A	S	H
■	R	■	N	■	U	■	A	■	M	■	Q	■
K	I	L	O	G	R	A	M	■	B	O	U	T
■	E	■	W	■	S	■	B	■	R	■	E	■
B	L	O	C	■	U	N	A	B	A	T	E	D
■	■	■	A	■	E	■	■	■	■	■	Z	■
■	S	U	P	E	R	F	L	U	I	T	Y	■
■	H	■	■	■	■	■	A	■	N	■	■	■
J	A	I	L	B	I	R	D	■	S	T	E	P
■	M	■	A	■	N	■	D	■	P	■	X	■
I	B	I	S	■	E	P	I	D	E	M	I	C
■	L	■	S	■	P	■	S	■	C	■	L	■
R	E	V	O	L	T	■	H	A	T	T	E	R

Kakuro 4402

2	9	8		4	9			7	2
3	7	5	2	1	6		2	9	8
		2	1		4	2	1		
	6	3		3	7	8	5	1	
3	9		5	1		7	4	2	1
1	3	4	2		3	9		9	3
	5	9	3	6	1		3	7	
		7	1	2		4	1		
9	2	1		3	8	9	5	7	2
4	1			1	5		2	5	1

Train Tracks 2928



Sudoku 16,977

1	4	5	9	8	3	2	7	6
2	7	8	4	5	6	1	9	3
6	3	9	2	7	1	5	8	4
8	1	4	5	6	2	7	3	9
5	2	7	3	9	4	8	6	1
3	9	6	8	1	7	4	5	2
9	5	1	6	4	8	3	2	7
7	6	3	1	2	5	9	4	8
4	8	2	7	3	9	6	1	5

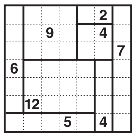
GK Crossword 348

L	I	B	Y	A	■	P	A	C	E	M	A	K	E	R
Y	■	A	■	E	■	R	■	Z	■	O	■	E	■	A
M	A	R	I	N	I	E	R	E	■	R	E	L	A	Y
P	■	■	■	E	■	D	■	C	■	T	■	L	■	E
H	O	C	H	I	M	I	N	H	C	I	T	Y	■	■
O	■	O	■	D	■	C	■	■	■	M	■	H	■	A
C	A	N	A	■	H	A	R	T	L	E	P	O	O	L
Y	■	S	■	M	■	T	■	H	■	R	■	L	■	E
T	E	T	R	A	M	E	T	E	R	■	I	M	A	X
E	■	A	■	N	■	■	■	M	■	P	■	E	■	A
■	■	N	I	G	E	L	L	A	L	A	W	S	O	N
S	■	T	■	R	■	I	■	T	■	R	■	■	■	D
C	H	I	C	O	■	B	E	R	K	S	H	I	R	E
O	■	N	■	V	■	E	■	I	■	E	■	A	■	R
T	H	E	R	E	F	L	E	X	■	C	A	N	I	S

Sudoku 16,978

5	8	9	7	6	2	3	4	1
1	4	6	5	3	8	9	7	2
2	3	7	9	4	1	8	5	6
3	6	5	1	2	9	7	8	4
4	9	8	3	7	6	1	2	5
7	2	1	8	5	4	6	3	9
8	7	2	6	1	5	4	9	3
6	5	3	4	9	7	2	1	8
9	1	4	2	8	3	5	6	7

Cell Blocks 5786



Set Square 4405

4	+	8	−	3
×	🟧	+	🟧	+
7	+	5	+	2
−	🟧	×	🟧	÷
9	+	6	−	1

Lexica 9017

S	A	L	A	M	I
■	L	■	■	O	■
C	L	A	S	S	■
■	■	W	■	T	■
■	P	E	E	L	■
■	■	■	■	Y	■

Sudoku 16,979

5	9	7	8	2	4	1	3	6
6	4	8	5	1	3	9	7	2
3	1	2	7	9	6	8	5	4
8	2	1	6	3	7	4	9	5
9	5	6	4	8	1	7	2	3
7	3	4	9	5	2	6	1	8
2	8	9	1	6	5	3	4	7
1	7	3	2	4	8	5	6	9
4	6	5	3	7	9	2	8	1

Futoshiki 5443

5		2		4		3	>	1
v		^						
4	>	3		5		1		2
						^		^
3		1		2		4		5
v						^		
2		4		1		5		3
v								
1		5	>	3	>	2	<	4

KenKen 6895

4− 6	3− 4	15× 3	1	3− 5	2
2	1	5	2÷ 6	3	5+ 4
15× 5	9+ 3	2	4	15+ 6	1
3	11+ 6	3+ 1	2	4	5
3− 1	5	12+ 4	15× 3	3÷ 2	6
4	2	6	5	3÷ 1	3

Lexica 9018

■	L	■	■	■	■
D	A	N	C	E	■
■	X	■	■	L	■
J	■	B	R	I	G
O	■	A	■	T	■
B	A	D	G	E	R

Killer 10,844

7	3	4	8	1	9	6	2	5
1	2	8	6	4	5	7	9	3
9	6	5	7	2	3	8	1	4
6	4	9	2	7	1	3	5	8
5	7	1	3	8	6	9	4	2
2	8	3	9	5	4	1	6	7
8	9	6	4	3	2	5	7	1
4	5	7	1	6	8	2	3	9
3	1	2	5	9	7	4	8	6

Killer 10,845

7	6	5	4	2	3	8	1	9
8	2	9	7	1	5	4	3	6
4	1	3	8	6	9	7	2	5
2	9	6	1	5	8	3	4	7
1	3	4	9	7	6	2	5	8
5	7	8	3	4	2	9	6	1
9	4	1	6	3	7	5	8	2
6	8	2	5	9	4	1	7	3
3	5	7	2	8	1	6	9	4

Today's solutions

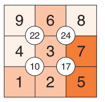
Concise Quintagram

1 Bossy
2 Bassy
3 Fossil
4 Blossom
5 Processed

Cryptic Quintagram

1 Canoe
2 Cannon
3 Breach
4 Infidel
5 District

Sakuro 4805



Brain Trainer

Easy 100
Medium 2
Harder 121

Word watch

Saikei (b) An ornamental miniature landscape (*Collins*)
Muntin (a) A supporting bar for a window (*Chambers*)
Polyonymous (c) Known by several names (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 Be5! Rxd3 2 Qxd3! Qxd3 completes the spadework and now White demonstrates the power of the discovered check: 3 Rxg7+ Kh8 4 Rg3+ Kh7 5 Rxd3 with an extra rook and bishop.

Quiz

1 Tunisia **2** Bing Crosby **3** Popeye **4** Three: Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May, Liz Truss **5** Portugal **6** The Spanish Inquisition **7** Erwin Rommel **8** Sheffield **9** *Build Me Up Buttercup* **10** Baden-Baden **11** Chaïm Soutine **12** David II **13** Abertay University **14** Roy Keane **15** Jaguar (*Panthera onca*)

THE TIMES

28.07.26

MindGames

For extra puzzles
See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Saikei
a The third-largest whale species
b An ornamental miniature landscape
c A form of short story

Muntin
a A supporting bar for a window
b A small deer with a barking call
c A hillock

Polyonymous
a A cyclops in Greek myth
b Habitually optimistic
c Known by several names

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 16,980

	6							
		5	9		3		1	
	1			5	4	9		
1		7	5		6		3	
						4	5	
3		4	1		9		6	
	2			3	5	1		
		6	8		7		2	
	7							

Difficult No 16,981

					2			
				4			2	5
				1		7	6	
			7			6	5	9
	6	7			5			4
5				3		1		
		6	3		8			
	2	5	4				3	
	1		2	9				

Super fiendish No 16,982

			1			5		
4				7				
			6					2
8	1	2	3	9			4	
		3	2	4		9		1
1	7		9	2				
	9	8		6				
		5		8			7	

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 Tunis is the capital of which country?

2 *Bing Sings the Hits* (1954) and *Bing with a Beat* (1957) are albums by which American crooner?

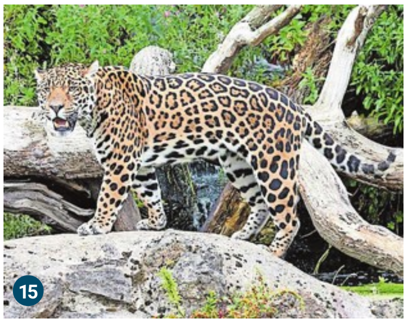
3 Which sailor is voiced by Jack Mercer in the 1942 cartoon *Olive Oyl and Water Don't Mix*?

4 The Conservative Party has produced how many female prime ministers?

5 Mário Soares (1924-2017) is regarded as the father of democracy in which EU country?

6 Which three-part Monty Python sketch features Cardinals Ximénez, Fang and Biggles?

ALAMY



7 Which German general defeated the British Eighth Army at the 1942 Battle of Gazala in Libya?

8 Which South Yorkshire city is home to the National Emergency Services Museum?

9 In the closing credits of *There's Something About Mary*, the cast lip-sync to which Foundations song?

10 Ivan Turgenev's 1867 novel *Smoke* is set in which German spa town?

11 Which Russian-born French artist painted *Flayed Rabbit* (c 1921) and *Flayed Ox* (c 1925)?

12 Which king of Scots was aged five when he began his 41-year reign in 1329?

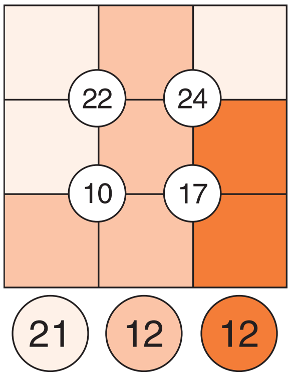
13 In 1997, which Scottish institution became the first university in the world to offer degrees in computer games?

14 Which Irish football legend heavily inspired the *Ted Lasso* character Roy Kent?

15 The western hemisphere's largest cat, which species is pictured?

Answers on page 15

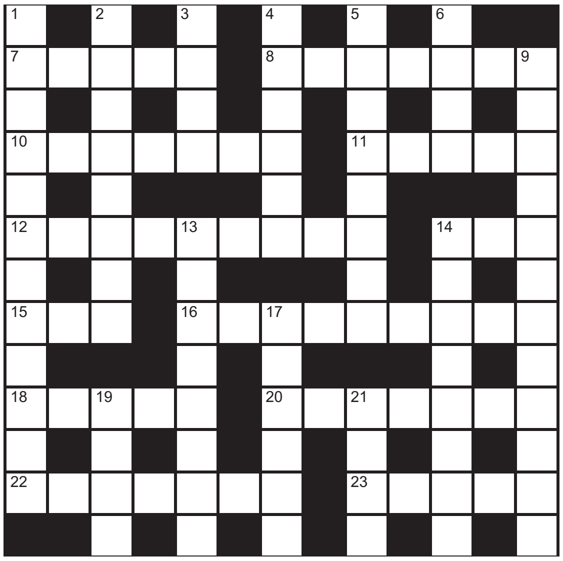
Sakuro No 4805



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3365 by Joker



Across
7 Loiter in low church (5)
8 Broadcasts with cool craft (7)
10 Hold down work with part of the media (7)
11 A portion of spinach or maize snack (5)
12 Quiet — new time traveller is breaking it (9)
14 Odd characters in crude signal (3)
15 Gently handle headless fish that's slippery (3)
16 Fellows interrupting devil allowed to execute (9)
18 Taken in and defeated, losing billions (5)
20 What's driven thespian to chase leading parts in *The Rivals* (7)
22 Not hypocritical after religious education (7)
23 Short and wide building occupied illegally (5)

Down
1 Rude nature of open elitism developing over son (12)
2 Institution treated hips a lot? (8)
3 Footwear was highly polished but not new (4)
4 Badger lashes out (6)
5 Manage cutting mostly superior colour of hair (8)
6 Fashionable bird Kenneth's abandoned (4)
9 Defend what Speaker does for country under another government (12)
13 One tried moving to get lined up (8)
14 Horse box enthusiast (8)
17 Person giving many a tap salesman's spiel (6)
19 Fighting vehicle to fail disastrously (4)
21 What begins attaching leather sole on to boot (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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